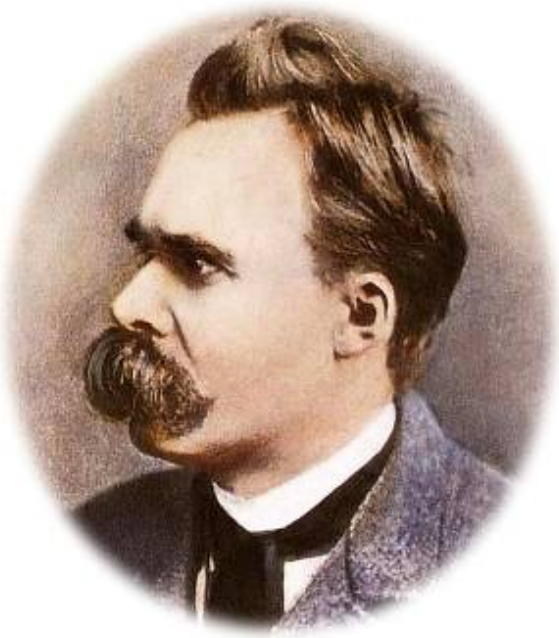
The Complete Works of

FRIEDRICH NIETZSCHE



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PHILOSOPHY IN THE TRAGIC AGE OF THE GREEKS

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PREFACE

(Probably 1874)

IF we know the aims of men who are strangers to us, it is sufficient for us to approve of or condemn them as wholes. Those who stand nearer to us we judge according to the means by which they further their aims; we often disapprove of their aims, but love them for the sake of their means and the style of their volition. Now philosophical systems are absolutely true only to their founders, to all later philosophers they are usually *one* big mistake, and to feebler minds a sum of mistakes and truths; at any rate if regarded as highest aim they are an error, and in so far reprehensible. Therefore many disapprove of every philosopher, because his aim is not theirs; they are those whom I called "strangers to us." Whoever on the contrary finds any pleasure at all in great men finds pleasure also in such systems, be they ever so erroneous, for they all have in them one point which is irrefutable, a personal touch, and colour; one can use them in order to form a picture of the philosopher, just as from a plant growing in a certain place one can form conclusions as to the soil. *That* mode of life, of viewing human affairs at any rate, has existed once and is therefore possible; the "system" is the growth in this soil or at least a part of this system....

I narrate the history of those philosophers simplified: I shall bring into relief only *that* point in every system which is a little bit of *personality*, and belongs to that which is irrefutable, and indiscussable, which history has to preserve: it is a first attempt to regain and recreate those natures by comparison, and to let the polyphony of Greek nature at least resound once again: the task is, to bring to light that which we must *always love and revere* and of which no later knowledge can rob us: the great man.

LATER PREFACE

(Towards the end of 1879)

THIS attempt to relate the history of the earlier Greek philosophers distinguishes itself from similar attempts by its brevity. This has been accomplished by mentioning but a small number of the doctrines of every philosopher, *i.e.,* by incompleteness. Those doctrines, however, have been selected in which the personal element of the philosopher re-echoes most strongly; whereas a complete enumeration of all possible propositions handed down to us — as is the custom in text-books — merely brings about one thing, the absolute silencing of the personal element. It is through this that those records become so tedious; for in systems which have been refuted it is only this personal ‘element that can still interest us, for this alone is eternally irrefutable. It is possible to shape the picture of a man out of three anecdotes. I endeavour to bring into relief three anecdotes out of every system and abandon the remainder.

PHILOSOPHY IN THE TRAGIC AGE OF THE GREEKS

1.

There are opponents of philosophy, and one does well to listen to them; especially if they dissuade the distempered heads of Germans from metaphysics and on the other hand preach to them purification through the Physis, as Goethe did, or healing through Music, as Wagner. The physicians of the people? condemn philosophy; he, therefore, who wants to justify it, must show to what purpose healthy nations use and have used philosophy. If he can show that, perhaps even the sick people will benefit by learning why philosophy is harmful just to them. There are indeed good instances of a health which can exist without any philosophy or with quite a moderate, almost a toying use of it; thus the Romans at their best period lived without philosophy. But where is to be found the instance of a nation becoming diseased whom philosophy had restored to health? Whenever philosophy showed itself helping, saving, prophylactic, it was with healthy people; it made sick people still more ill. If ever a nation was disintegrated and but loosely connected with the individuals, never has philosophy bound these individuals closer to the whole. If ever an individual was willing to stand aside and plant around himself the hedge of self-sufficiency, philosophy was always ready to isolate him still more and to destroy him through isolation. She is dangerous where she is not in her full right, and it is only the health of a nation but not that of every nation which gives her this right.

Let us now look around for the highest authority as to what constitutes the health of a nation. The Greeks, as *the* truly healthy nation, have *justified* philosophy once for all by having philosophised; and that indeed more than all other nations. They could not even stop at the right time, for still in their withered age they comported themselves as heated votaries of philosophy, although they understood by it only the pious sophistries and the sacrosanct hairsplittings of Christian dogmatics. They themselves have much lessened their merit for barbarian posterity by not being able to stop at the right time, because that posterity in its uninstructed and impetuous youth necessarily became entangled in those artfully woven nets and ropes.

On the contrary, the Greek knew how to begin at the right time, and this lesson, when one ought to begin philosophising, they teach more distinctly than any other nation. For it should not be begun when trouble comes as perhaps some presume who derive philosophy from moroseness; no, but in good fortune, in mature manhood, out of the midst of the fervent serenity of a brave and victorious man's estate. The fact that the Greeks philosophised at that time throws light on the nature of philosophy and her task as well as on the nature of the Greeks themselves. Had they at that time been such commonsense and precocious experts and gayards as the learned Philistine of our days perhaps imagines, or had their life been only a state of voluptuous soaring, chiming, breathing and feeling, as the unlearned visionary is pleased to assume, then the spring of philosophy would not have come to light among them. At the best there would have come forth a brook soon trickling away in the sand or evaporating into fogs, but never that broad river flowing forth with the proud beat of its waves, the river which we know as Greek Philosophy.

True, it has been eagerly pointed out how much the Greeks could find and learn abroad, in the Orient, and how many different things they may easily have brought from there. Of course an odd spectacle resulted, when certain scholars brought together the alleged masters from the Orient and the possible disciples from Greece, and exhibited Zarathustra near Heraclitus, the Hindoos near the Eleates, the Egyptians near Empedocles, or even Anaxagoras among the Jews and Pythagoras among the Chinese. In detail little has been determined; but we should in no way object to the general idea, if people did not burden us with the conclusion that therefore Philosophy had only been imported into Greece and was not indigenous to the soil, yea, that she, as something foreign, had possibly ruined rather than improved the Greek. Nothing is more foolish than to swear by the fact that the Greeks had an aboriginal culture; no, they rather absorbed all the culture flourishing among other nations, and they advanced so far, just because they understood how to hurl the spear further from the very spot where another nation had let it rest. They were admirable in the art of learning productively, and so, like them, we *ought* to learn from our neighbours, with a view to Life not to pedantic knowledge, using everything learnt as a foothold whence to leap high and still higher than our neighbour. The questions as to the beginning of philosophy are quite negligible, for everywhere in the beginning there is the crude, the unformed, the empty and the ugly; and in all things only the higher stages come into consideration. He who in the place of Greek philosophy prefers to concern himself with that of Egypt and Persia, because the latter are perhaps more "original" and certainly older, proceeds just as ill-advisedly as those who cannot be at ease before they have traced back the Greek mythology, so grand and

profound, to such physical trivialities as sun, lightning, weather and fog, as its prime origins, and who fondly imagine they have rediscovered for instance in the restricted worship of the one celestial vault among the other Indo-Germans a purer form of religion than the polytheistic worship of the Greek had been. The road towards the beginning always leads into barbarism, and he who is concerned with the Greeks ought always to keep in mind the fact that the unsubdued thirst for knowledge in itself always barbarises just as much as the hatred of knowledge, and that the Greeks have subdued their inherently insatiable thirst for knowledge by their regard for Life, by an ideal need of Life, — since they wished to live immediately that which they learnt. The Greeks also philosophised as men of culture and with the aims of culture, and therefore saved themselves the trouble of inventing once again the elements of philosophy and knowledge out of some autochthonous conceit, and with a will they at once set themselves to fill out, enhance, raise and purify these elements they had taken over in such a way, that only now in a higher sense and in a purer sphere they became inventors. For they discovered the *typical philosophers genius,* and the inventions of all posterity have added nothing essential.

Every nation is put to shame if one points out such a wonderfully idealised company of philosophers as that of the early Greek masters, Thales, Anaximander, Heraclitus, Parmenides, Anaxagoras, Empedocles, Democritus and Socrates. All those men are integral, entire and self-contained, (*Cf.* Napoleon's word about Goethe: "Voilá un homme!" — TR.) and hewn out of one stone. Severe necessity exists between their thinking and their character. They are not bound by any convention, because at that time no professional class of philosophers and scholars existed. They all stand before us in magnificent solitude as the only ones who then devoted their life exclusively to knowledge. They all possess the virtuous energy of the Ancients, whereby they excel all the later philosophers in finding their own form and in perfecting it by metamorphosis in its most minute details and general aspect. For they were met by no helpful and facilitating fashion. Thus together they form what Schopenhauer, in opposition to the Republic of Scholars, has called a Republic of Geniuses; one giant calls to another across the arid intervals of ages, and, undisturbed by a wanton, noisy race of dwarfs, creeping about beneath them, the sublime intercourse of spirits continues.

Of this sublime intercourse of spirits I have resolved to relate those items which our modern hardness of hearing might perhaps hear and understand; that means certainly the least of all. It seems to me that those old sages from Thales to Socrates have discussed in that intercourse, although in its most general aspect, everything that constitutes for our contemplation the peculiarly Hellenic. In their

intercourse, as already in their personalities, they express distinctly the great features of Greek genius of which the whole of Greek history is a shadowy impression, a hazy copy, which consequently speaks less clearly. If we could rightly interpret the total life of the Greek nation, we should ever find reflected only that picture which in her highest geniuses shines with more resplendent colours. Even the first experience of philosophy on Greek soil, the sanction of the Seven Sages is a distinct and unforgettable line in the picture of the Hellenic. Other nations have their Saints, the Greeks have Sages. Rightly it has been said that a nation is characterised not only by her great men but rather by the manner in which she recognises and honours them. In other ages the philosopher is an accidental solitary wanderer in the most hostile environment, either slinking through or pushing himself through with clenched fists. With the Greek however the philosopher is not accidental; when in the Sixth and Fifth centuries amidst the most frightful dangers and seductions of secularisation he appears and as it were steps forth from the cave of Trophonios into the very midst of luxuriance, the discoverers' happiness, the wealth and the sensuousness of the Greek colonies, then we divine that he comes as a noble warner for the same purpose for which in those centuries Tragedy was born and which the Orphic mysteries in their grotesque hieroglyphics give us to understand. The opinion of those philosophers on Life and Existence altogether means so much more than a modern opinion because they had before themselves Life in a luxuriant perfection, and because with them, unlike us, the sense of the thinker was not muddled by the disunion engendered by the wish for freedom, beauty, fulness of life and the love for truth that only asks: What is the good of Life at all? The mission which the philosopher has to discharge within a real Culture, fashioned in a homogeneous style, cannot be clearly conjectured out of our circumstances and experiences for the simple reason that we have no such culture. No, it is only a Culture like the Greek which can answer the question as to that task of the philosopher, only such a Culture can, as I said before, justify philosophy at all; because such a Culture alone knows and can demonstrate why and how the philosopher is *not* an accidental, chance wanderer driven now hither, now thither. There is a steely necessity which fetters the philosopher to a true Culture: but what if this Culture does not exist? Then the philosopher is an incalculable and therefore terror-inspiring comet, whereas in the favourable case, he shines as the central star in the solar-system of culture. It is for this reason that the Greeks justify the philosopher, because with them he is no comet.

After such contemplations it will be accepted without offence if I speak of the pre-Platonic philosophers as of a homogeneous company, and devote this paper to them exclusively. Something quite new begins with Plato; or it might be said with equal justice that in comparison with that Republic of Geniuses from Thales to Socrates, the philosophers since Plato lack something essential.

Whoever wants to express himself unfavourably about those older masters may call them one-sided, and their *Epigones*, with Plato as head, many-sided. Yet it would be more just and unbiassed to conceive of the latter as philosophic hybrid-characters, of the former as the pure types. Plato himself is the first magnificent hybrid-character, and as such finds expression as well in his philosophy as in his personality. In his ideology are united Socratian, Pythagorean, and Heraclitean elements, and for this reason it is no typically pure phenomenon. As man, too, Plato mingles the features of the royally secluded, all-sufficing Heraclitus, of the melancholy-compassionate and legislatory Pythagoras and of the psycho-expert dialectician Socrates. All later philosophers are such hybrid-characters; wherever something one-sided does come into prominence with them as in the case of the Cynics, it is not type but caricature. Much more important however is the fact that they are founders of sects and that the sects founded by them are all institutions in direct opposition to the Hellenic culture and the unity of its style prevailing up to that time. In their way they seek a redemption, but only for the individuals or at the best for groups of friends and disciples closely connected with them. The activity of the older philosophers tends, although they were unconscious of it, towards a cure and purification on a large scale; the mighty course of Greek culture is not to be stopped; awful dangers are to be removed out of the way of its current; the philosopher protects and defends his native country. Now, since Plato, he is in exile and conspires against his fatherland.

It is a real misfortune that so very little of those older philosophic masters has come down to us and that all complete works of theirs are withheld from us. Involuntarily, on account of that loss, we measure them according to wrong standards and allow ourselves to be influenced unfavourably towards them by the mere accidental fact that Plato and, Aristotle never lacked appreciators and copyists. Some people presuppose a special providence for books, a *fatum libellorum;* such a providence however would at any rate be a very malicious one if it deemed it wise to withhold from us the works of Heraclitus, Empedocles' wonderful poem, and the writings of Democritus, whom the ancients put on a par with Plato, whom he even excels as far as ingenuity goes, and as a substitute put into our hand Stoics, Epicureans and Cicero. Probably the most sublime part of Greek thought and its expression in words is lost to us; a fate which will not surprise the man who remembers the misfortunes of Scotus Erigena or of Pascal,

and who considers that even in this enlightened century the first edition of Schopenhauer's "*The World As Will And Idea*" became waste-paper. If somebody will presuppose a special fatalistic power with respect to such things he may do so and say with Goethe: "Let no one complain about and grumble at things vile and mean, they *are* the real rulers, — however much this be gainsaid!" In particular they are more powerful than the power of truth. Mankind very rarely produces a good book in which with daring freedom is intonated the battle-song of truth, the song of philosophic heroism; and yet whether it is to live a century longer or to crumble and moulder into dust and ashes, depends on the most miserable accidents, on the sudden mental eclipse of men's heads, on superstitious convulsions and antipathies, finally on fingers not too fond of writing or even on eroding bookworms and rainy weather. But we will not lament but rather take the advice of the reproving and consolatory words which Hamann addresses to scholars who lament over lost works. "Would not the artist who succeeded in throwing a lentil through the eye of a needle have sufficient, with a bushel of lentils, to practise his acquired skill? One would like to put this question to all scholars who do not know how to use the works of the Ancients any better than that man used his lentils." It might be added in our case that not one more word, anecdote, or date needed to be transmitted to us than has been transmitted, indeed that even much less might have been preserved for us and yet we should have been able to establish the general doctrine that the Greeks justify philosophy.

A time which suffers from the so-called "general education" but has no culture and no unity of style in her life hardly knows what to do with philosophy, even if the latter were proclaimed by the very Genius of Truth in the streets and market-places. She rather remains at such a time the learned monologue of the solitary rambler, the accidental booty of the individual, the hidden closet-secret or the innocuous chatter between academic senility and childhood.

Nobody dare venture to fulfil in himself the law of philosophy, nobody lives philosophically, with that simple manly faith which compelled an Ancient, wherever he was, whatever he did, to deport himself as a Stoic, when he had once pledged his faith to the Stoa. All modern philosophising is limited politically and regulated by the police to learned semblance. Thanks to governments, churches, academies, customs, fashions, and the cowardice of man, it never gets beyond the sigh: "If only!..." or beyond the knowledge: "Once upon a time there was.. Philosophy is without rights; therefore modern man, if he were at all courageous and conscientious, ought to condemn her and perhaps banish her with words similar to those by which Plato banished the tragic poets from his State. Of course there would be left a reply for her, as there remained to those poets against Plato. If one once compelled her to speak out she might say perhaps: "Miserable Nation!

Is it my fault if among you I am on the tramp, like a fortune teller through the land, and must hide and disguise myself, as if I were a great sinner and ye my judges? Just look at my sister, Art! It is with her as with me; we have been cast adrift among the Barbarians and no longer know how to save ourselves. Here we are lacking, it is true, every good right; but the judges before whom we find justice judge you also and will tell you: First acquire a culture; then you shall experience what Philosophy can and will do." —

3

Greek philosophy seems to begin with a preposterous fancy, with the proposition that *water* is the origin and mother-womb of all things. Is it really necessary to stop there and become serious? Yes, and for three reasons: Firstly, because the proposition does enunciate something about the origin of things; secondly, because it does so without figure and fable; thirdly and lastly, because in it is contained, although only in the chrysalis state, the idea: Everything is one. The first mentioned reason leaves Thales still in the company of religious and superstitious people, the second however takes him out of this company and shows him to us as a natural philosopher, but by virtue of the third, Thales becomes the first Greek philosopher. If he had said: "Out of water earth is evolved," we should only have a scientific hypothesis; a false one, though nevertheless difficult to refute. But he went beyond the scientific. In his presentation of this concept of unity through the hypothesis of water, Thales has not surmounted the low level of the physical discernments of his time, but at the best overleapt them. The deficient and unorganised observations of an empiric nature which Thales had made as to the occurrence and transformations of water, or to be more exact, of the Moist, would not in the least have made possible or even suggested such an immense generalisation. That which drove him to this generalisation was a metaphysical dogma, which had its origin in a mystic intuition and which together with the ever renewed endeavours to express it better, we find in all philosophies, — the proposition: *Everything is one!*

How despotically such a faith deals with all empiricism is worthy of note; with Thales especially one can learn how Philosophy has behaved at all times, when she wanted to get beyond the hedges of experience to her magically attracting goal. On light supports she leaps in advance; hope and divination wing her feet. Calculating reason too, clumsily pants after her and seeks better supports in its attempt to reach that alluring goal, at which its divine companion has already arrived. One sees in imagination two wanderers by a wild forest-stream which carries with it rolling stones; the one, lightfooted, leaps over it using the stones

and swinging himself upon them ever further and further, though they precipitously sink into the depths behind him. The other stands helpless there most of the time; he has first to build a pathway which will bear his heavy, weary step; sometimes that cannot be done and then no god will help him across the stream. What therefore carries philosophical thinking so quickly to its goal? Does it distinguish itself from calculating and measuring thought only by its more rapid flight through large spaces? No, for a strange illogical power wings the foot of philosophical thinking; and this power is Fancy. Lifted by the latter, philosophical thinking leaps from possibility to possibility, and these for the time being are taken as certainties; and now and then even whilst on the wing it gets hold of certainties. An ingenious presentiment shows them to the flier; demonstrable certainties are divined at a distance to be at this point. Especially powerful is the strength of Fancy in the lightning-like seizing and illuminating of similarities; afterwards reflection applies its standards and models and seeks to substitute the similarities by equalities, that which was seen side by side by causalities. But though this should never be possible, even in the case of Thales the indemonstrable philosophising has yet its value; although all supports are broken when Logic and the rigidity of Empiricism want to get across to the proposition: Everything is water; yet still there is always, after the demolition of the scientific edifice, a remainder, and in this very remainder lies a moving force and as it were the hope of future fertility.

Of course I do not mean that the thought in any restriction or attenuation, or as allegory, still retains some kind of “truth”; as if, for instance, one might imagine the creating artist standing near a waterfall, and seeing in the forms which leap towards him, an artistically prefiguring game of the water with human and animal bodies, masks, plants, rocks, nymphs, griffins, and with all existing types in general, so that to him the proposition: Everything is water, is confirmed. The thought of Thales has rather its value — even after the perception of its indemonstrableness — in the very fact, that it was meant unmythically and unallegorically. The Greeks among whom Thales became so suddenly conspicuous were the anti-type of all realists by only believing essentially in the reality of men and gods, and by contemplating the whole of nature as if it were only a disguise, masquerade and metamorphosis of these god-men. Man was to them the truth, and essence of things; everything else mere phenomenon and deceiving play. For that very reason they experienced incredible difficulty in conceiving of ideas as ideas. Whilst with the moderns the most personal item sublimates itself into abstractions, with them the most abstract notions became personified. Thales, however, said, “Not man but water is the reality of things”; he began to believe in nature, in so far that he at least believed in water. As a

mathematician and astronomer he had grown cold towards everything mythical and allegorical, and even if he did not succeed in becoming disillusioned as to the pure abstraction, Everything is one, and although he left off at a physical expression he was nevertheless among the Greeks of his time a surprising rarity. Perhaps the exceedingly conspicuous *Orpheans* possessed in a still higher degree than he the faculty of conceiving abstractions and of thinking unplastically; only they did not succeed in expressing these abstractions except in the form of the allegory. Also Pherecydes of Syrus who is a contemporary of Thales and akin to him in many physical conceptions hovers with the expression of the latter in that middle region where Allegory is wedded to Mythos, so that he dares, for example, to compare the earth with a winged oak, which hangs in the air with spread pinions and which Zeus bedecks, after the defeat of Kronos, with a magnificent robe of honour, into which with his own hands Zeus embroiders lands, water and rivers. In contrast with such gloomy allegorical philosophising scarcely to be translated into the realm of the comprehensible, Thales' are the works of a creative master who began to look into Nature's depths without fantastic fabling. If as it is true he used Science and the demonstrable but soon out-leapt them, then this likewise is a typical characteristic of the philosophical genius. The Greek word which designates the Sage belongs etymologically to *sapio,* I taste, *sapiens,* the tasting one, *sisyphos,* the man of the most delicate taste; the peculiar art of the philosopher therefore consists, according to the opinion of the people, in a delicate selective judgment by taste, by discernment, by significant differentiation. He is not prudent, if one calls *him* prudent, who in his own affairs finds out the good; Aristotle rightly says: "That which Thales and Anaxagoras know, people will call unusual, astounding, difficult, divine but — useless, since human possessions were of no concern to those two." Through thus selecting and precipitating the unusual, astounding, difficult, and divine, Philosophy marks the boundarylines dividing her from Science in the same way as she does it from Prudence by the emphasising of the useless. Science without thus selecting, without such delicate taste, pounces upon everything knowable, in the blind covetousness to know all at any price; philosophical thinking however is always on the track of the things worth knowing, on the track of the great and most important discernments. Now the idea of greatness is changeable, as well in the moral as in the aesthetic realm, thus Philosophy begins with a legislation with respect to greatness, she becomes a Nomenclator. "That is great," she says, and therewith she raises man above the blind, untamed covetousness of his thirst for knowledge. By the idea of greatness she assuages this thirst: and it is chiefly by this, that she contemplates the greatest discernment, that of the essence and kernel of things, as attainable and attained. When Thales says, "Everything is water,"

man is startled up out of his worm-like mauling of and crawling about among the individual sciences; he divines the last solution of things and masters through this divination the common perplexity of the lower grades of knowledge. The philosopher tries to make the total-chord of the universe re-echo within himself and then to project it into ideas outside himself: whilst he is contemplative like the creating artist, sympathetic like the religionist, looking out for ends and causalities like the scientific man, whilst he feels himself swell up to the macrocosm, he still retains the circumspection to contemplate himself coldly as the reflex of the world; he retains that cool-headedness, which the dramatic artist possesses, when he transforms himself into other bodies, speaks out of them, and yet knows how to project this transformation outside himself into written verses. What the verse is to the poet, dialectic thinking is to the philosopher; he snatches at it in order to hold fast his enchantment, in order to petrify it. And just as words and verse to the dramatist are only stammerings in a foreign language, to tell in it what he lived, what he saw, and what he can directly promulgate by gesture and music only, thus the expression of every deep philosophical intuition by means of dialectics and scientific reflection is, it is true, on the one hand the only means to communicate what has been seen, but on the other hand it is a paltry means, and at the bottom a metaphorical, absolutely inexact translation into a different sphere and language. Thus Thales saw the Unity of the "Existent," and when he wanted to communicate this idea he talked of water.

4

Whilst the general type of the philosopher in the picture of Thales is set off rather hazily, the picture of his great successor already speaks much more distinctly to us. *Anaximander* of Milet, the first philosophical author of the Ancients, writes in the very way that the typical philosopher will always write as long as he is not alienated from ingenuousness and *naivete* by odd claims: in a grand lapidarian style of writing, sentence for sentence... a witness of a new inspiration, and an expression of the sojourning in sublime contemplations. The thought and its form are milestones on the path towards the highest wisdom. With such a lapidarian emphasis Anaximander once said: "Whence things originated, thither, according to necessity, they must return and perish; for they must pay penalty and be judged for their injustices according to the order of time." Enigmatical utterance of a true pessimist, oracular inscription on the boundary-stone of Greek philosophy, how shall we explain thee?

The only serious moralist of our century in the Parergis (Vol ii., chap. 12, "Additional Remarks on The Doctrine about the Suffering in the World, Appendix

of Corresponding Passages") urges on us a similar contemplation: "The right standard by which to judge every human being is that he really is a being who ought not to exist at all, but who is expiating his existence by manifold forms of suffering and death: — What can one expect from such a being? Are we not all sinners condemned to death? We expiate our birth firstly by our life and secondly by our death." He who in the physiognomy of our universal human lot reads this doctrine and already recognises the fundamental bad quality of every human life, in the fact that none can stand a very close and careful contemplation — although our time, accustomed to the biographical epidemic, seems to think otherwise and more loftily about the dignity of man; he who, like Schopenhauer, on "the heights of the Indian breezes" has heard the sacred word about the moral value of existence, will be kept with difficulty from making an extremely anthropomorphic metaphor and from generalizing that melancholy doctrine — at first only limited to human life — and applying it by transmission to the general character of all existence. It may not be very logical, it is however at any rate very human and moreover quite in harmony with the philosophical leaping described above, now with Anaximander to consider all Becoming as a punishable emancipation from eternal "Being," as a wrong that is to be atoned for by destruction. Everything that has once come into existence also perishes, whether we think of human life or of water or of heat and cold; everywhere where definite qualities are to be noticed, we are allowed to prophesy the extinction of these qualities — according to the all-embracing proof of experience. Thus a being that possesses definite qualities and consists of them, can never be the origin and principle of things; the veritable *ens,* the "Existent," Anaximander concluded, cannot possess any definite qualities, otherwise, like all other things, it would necessarily have originated and perished. In order that Becoming may not cease, the Primordial-being must be indefinite. The immortality and eternity of the Primordial-being lies not in an infiniteness and inexhaustibility — as usually the expounders of Anaximander presuppose — but in this, that it lacks the definite qualities which lead to destruction, for which reason it bears also its name: The Indefinite. The thus labelled Primordial-being is superior to all Becoming and for this very reason it guarantees the eternity and unimpeded course of Becoming. This last unity in that Indefinite, the mother-womb of all things, can, it is true, be designated only negatively by man, as something to which no predicate out of the existing world of Becoming can be allotted, and might be considered a peer to the Kantian "Thing-in-itself."

Of course he who is able to wrangle persistently with others as to what kind of thing that primordial substance really was, whether perhaps an intermediate thing between air and water, or perhaps between air and fire, has not understood our

philosopher at all; this is likewise to be said about those, who seriously ask themselves, whether Anaximander had thought of his primordial substance as a mixture of all existing substances. Rather we must direct our gaze to the place where we can learn that Anaximander no longer treated the question of the origin of the world as purely physical; we must direct our gaze towards that first stated lapidarian proposition. When on the contrary he saw a sum of wrongs to be expiated in the plurality of things that have become, then he, as the first Greek, with daring grasp caught up the tangle of the most profound ethical problem. How can anything perish that has a right to exist? Whence that restless Becoming and giving-birth, whence that expression of painful distortion on the face of Nature, whence the never-ending dirge in all realms of existence? Out of this world of injustice, of audacious apostasy from the primordial-unity of things Anaximander flees into a metaphysical castle, leaning out of which he turns his gaze far and wide in order at last, after a pensive silence, to address to all beings this question: "What is your existence worth? And if it is worth nothing why are you there? By your guilt, I observe, you sojourn in this world. You will have to expiate it by death. Look how your earth fades; the seas decrease and dry up, the marine-shell on the mountain shows you how much already they have dried up; fire destroys your world even now, finally it will end in smoke and ashes. But again and again such a world of transitoriness will ever build itself up; who shall redeem you from the curse of Becoming?"

Not every kind of life may have been welcome to a man who put such questions, whose upward-soaring thinking continually broke the empiric ropes, in order to take at once to the highest, superlunary flight. Willingly we believe tradition, that he walked along in especially dignified attire and showed a truly tragic hauteur in his gestures and habits of life. He lived as he wrote; he spoke as solemnly as he dressed himself, he raised his hand and placed his foot as if this existence was a tragedy, and he had been born in order to co-operate in that tragedy by playing the *role* of hero. In all that he was the great model of Empedocles. His fellow-citizens elected him the leader of an emigrating colony — perhaps they were pleased at being able to honour him and at the same time to get rid of him. His thought also emigrated and founded colonies; in Ephesus and in Elea they could not get rid of him; and if they could not resolve upon staying at the spot where he stood, they nevertheless knew that they had been led there by him, whence they now prepared to proceed without him.

Thales shows the need of simplifying the empire of plurality, and of reducing it to a mere expansion or disguise of the *one single* existing quality, water. Anaximander goes beyond him with two steps. Firstly he puts the question to himself: How, if there exists an eternal Unity at all, is that Plurality possible? and

he takes the answer out of the contradictory, self-devouring and denying character of this Plurality. The existence of this Plurality becomes a moral phenomenon to him; it is not justified, it expiates itself continually through destruction. But then the questions occur to him: Yet why has not everything that has become perished long ago, since, indeed, quite an eternity of time has already gone by? Whence the ceaseless current of the River of Becoming? He can save himself from these questions only by mystic possibilities: the eternal Becoming can have its origin only in the eternal "Being," the conditions for that apostasy from that eternal "Being" to a Becoming in injustice are ever the same, the constellation of things cannot help itself being thus fashioned, that no end is to be seen of that stepping forth of the individual being out of the lap of the "Indefinite." At this Anaximander stayed; that is, he remained within the deep shadows which like gigantic spectres were lying on the mountain range of such a world-perception. The more one wanted to approach the problem of solving how out of the Indefinite the Definite, out of the Eternal the Temporal, out of the Just the Unjust could by secession ever originate, the darker the night became. —

5

Towards the midst of this mystic night, in which Anaximander's problem of the Becoming was wrapped up, Heraclitus of Ephesus approached and illuminated it by a divine flash of lightning. "I contemplate the Becoming," he exclaimed,—" and nobody has so attentively watched this eternal wave-surging and rhythm of things. And what do I behold? Lawfulness, infallible certainty, ever equal paths of Justice, condemning Erinyes behind all transgressions of the laws, the whole world the spectacle of a governing justice and of demoniacally omnipresent natural forces subject to justice's sway. I do not behold the punishment of that which has become, but the justification of Becoming. When has sacrilege, when has apostasy manifested itself in inviolable forms, in laws esteemed sacred? Where injustice sways, there is caprice, disorder, irregularity, contradiction; where however Law and Zeus' daughter, Dike, rule alone, as in this world, how could the sphere of guilt, of expiation, of judgment, and as it were the place of execution of all condemned ones be there?"

From this intuition Heraclitus took two coherent negations, which are put into the right light only by a comparison with the propositions of his predecessor. Firstly, he denied the duality of two quite diverse worlds, into the assumption of which Anaximander had been pushed; he no longer distinguished a physical world from a metaphysical, a realm of definite qualities from a realm of indefinable indefiniteness. Now after this first step he could neither be kept back

any longer from a still greater audacity of denying: he denied “Being” altogether. For this one world which was left to him, — shielded all round by eternal, unwritten laws, flowing up and down in the brazen beat of rhythm, — shows nowhere persistence indestructibility, a bulwark in the stream. Louder than Anaximander, Heraclitus exclaimed:

“I see nothing but Becoming. Be not deceived! It is the fault of your limited outlook and not the fault of the essence of things if you believe that you see firm land anywhere in the ocean of Becoming and Passing. You need names for things, just as if they had a rigid permanence, but the very river in which you bathe a second time is no longer the same one which you entered before.”

Heraclitus has as his royal property the highest power of intuitive conception, whereas towards the other mode of conception which is consummated by ideas and logical combinations, that is towards reason, he shows himself cool, apathetic, even hostile, and he seems to derive a pleasure when he is able to contradict reason by means of a truth gained intuitively, and this he does in such propositions as: “Everything has always its opposite within itself,” so fearlessly that Aristotle before the tribunal of Reason accuses him of the highest crime, of having sinned against the law of opposition. Intuitive representation however embraces two things: firstly, the present, motley, changing world, pressing on us in all experiences, secondly, the conditions by means of which alone any experience of this world becomes possible: time and space. For these are able to be intuitively apprehended, purely in themselves and independent of any experience; *i.e.*, they can be perceived, although they are without definite contents. If now Heraclitus considered time in this fashion, dissociated from all experiences, he had in it the most instructive monogram of all that which falls within the realm of intuitive conception. Just as he conceived of time, so also for instance did Schopenhauer, who repeatedly says of it: that in it every instant exists only in so far as it has annihilated the preceding one, its father, in order to be itself effaced equally quickly; that past and future are as unreal as any dream; that the present is only the dimensionless and unstable boundary between the two; that however, like time, so space, and again like the latter, so also everything that is simultaneously in space and time, has only a relative existence, only through and for the sake of a something else, of the same kind as itself, *i.e.,* existing only under the same limitations. This truth is in the highest degree self-evident, accessible to everyone, and just for that very reason, abstractly and rationally, it is only attained with great difficulty. Whoever has this truth before his eyes must however also proceed at once to the next Heraclitean consequence and say that the whole essence of actuality is in fact activity, and that for actuality there is no other kind of existence and reality, as Schopenhauer has likewise expounded (

"The World As Will And Idea," Vol. I., Bk. I, sec. 4): "Only as active does it fill space and time: its action upon the immediate object determines the perception in which alone it exists: the effect of the action of any material object upon any other, is known only in so far as the latter acts upon the immediate object in a different way from that in which it acted before; it consists in this alone. Cause and effect thus constitute the whole nature of matter; its true being *is* its action. The totality of everything material is therefore very appropriately called in German *Wirklichkeit* (actuality) — a word which is far more expressive than *Realitat* (reality). (Mira in quibusdam rebus verborum proprietas est, et consuetudo sermonis antiqui quaedam efficacissimis notis signat (Seneca, Epist. 81). — TR.) That upon which actuality acts is always matter; actuality's whole 'Being' and essence therefore consist only in the orderly change, which *one* part of it causes in another, and is therefore wholly relative, according to a relation which is valid only within the boundary of actuality, as in the case of time and space."

The eternal and exclusive Becoming, the total instability of all reality and actuality, which continually works and becomes and never *is,* as Heraclitus teaches — is an awful and appalling conception, and in its effects most nearly related to that sensation, by which during an earthquake one loses confidence in the firmly-grounded earth. It required an astonishing strength to translate this effect into its opposite, into the sublime, into happy astonishment. Heraclitus accomplished this through an observation of the proper course of all Becoming and Passing, which he conceived of under the form of polarity, as the divergence of a force into two qualitatively different, opposite actions, striving after reunion. A quality is set continually at variance with itself and separates itself into its opposites: these opposites continually strive again one towards another. The common people of course think to recognise something rigid, completed, consistent; but the fact of the matter is that at any instant, bright and dark, sour and sweet are side by side and attached to one another like two wrestlers of whom sometimes the one succeeds, sometimes the other. According to Heraclitus honey is at the same time sweet and bitter, and the world itself an amphora whose contents constantly need stirring up. Out of the war of the opposites all Becoming originates; the definite and to us seemingly persistent qualities express only the momentary predominance of the one fighter, but with that the war is not at an end; the wrestling continues to all eternity. Everything happens according to this struggle, and this very struggle manifests eternal justice. It is a wonderful conception, drawn from the purest source of Hellenism, which considers the struggle as the continual sway of a homogeneous, severe justice bound by eternal laws. Only a Greek was able to consider this conception as the fundament of a

Cosmodicy; it is Hesiod's good Eris transfigured into the cosmic principle, it is the idea of a contest, an idea held by individual Greeks and by their State, and translated out of the gymnasia and palaestra, out of the artistic agonistics, out of the struggle of the political parties and of the towns into the most general principle, so that the machinery of the universe is regulated by it. Just as every Greek fought as though he alone were in the right, and as though an absolutely sure standard of judicial opinion could at any instant decide whither victory is inclining, thus the qualities wrestle one with another, according to inviolable laws and standards which are inherent in the struggle. The Things themselves in the permanency of which the limited intellect of man and animal believes, do not "exist" at all; they are as the fierce flashing and fiery sparkling of drawn swords, as the stars of Victory rising with a radiant resplendence in the battle of the opposite qualities.

That struggle which is peculiar to all Becoming, that eternal interchange of victory is again described by Schopenhauer: ("The World As Will And Idea," Vol i., Bk. 2, sec. 27) "The permanent matter must constantly change its form; for under the guidance of causality, mechanical, physical, chemical, and organic phenomena, eagerly striving to appear, wrest the matter from each other, for each desires to reveal its own Idea. This strife may be followed up through the whole of nature; indeed nature exists only through it." The following pages give the most noteworthy illustrations of this struggle, only that the prevailing tone of this description ever remains other than that of Heraclitus in so far as to Schopenhauer the struggle is a proof of the Will to Life falling out with itself; it is to him a feasting on itself on the part of this dismal, dull impulse, as a phenomenon on the whole horrible and not at all making for happiness. The arena and the object of this struggle is Matter, — which some natural forces alternately endeavour to disintegrate and build up again at the expense of other natural forces, — as also Space and Time, the union of which through causality *is* this very matter.

6

Whilst the imagination of Heraclitus measured the restlessly moving universe, the "actuality "(*Wirklichkeif),* with the eye of the happy spectator, who sees innumerable pairs wrestling in joyous combat entrusted to the superintendence of severe umpires, a still higher presentiment seized him, he no longer could contemplate the wrestling pairs and the umpires, separated one from another; the very umpires seemed to fight, and the fighters seemed to be their own judges — yea, since at the bottom he conceived only of the one Justice eternally swaying, he dared to exclaim: "The contest of The Many is itself pure justice. And after all:

The One is The Many. For what are all those qualities according to their nature? Are they immortal gods? Are they separate beings working for themselves from the beginning and without end? And if the world which we see knows only Becoming and Passing but no Permanence, should perhaps those qualities constitute a differently fashioned metaphysical world, true, not a world of unity as Anaximander sought behind the fluttering veil of plurality, but a world of eternal and essential pluralities?" Is it possible that however violently he had denied such duality, Heraclitus has after all by a round-about way accidentally got into the dual cosmic order, an order with an Olympus of numerous immortal gods and demons, — viz., *many* realities, — and with a human world, which sees only the dust-cloud of the Olympic struggle and the flashing of divine spears, — *i.e.,* only a Becoming? Anaximander had fled just from these definite qualities into the lap of the metaphysical "Indefinite"; because the former *became* and passed, he had denied them a true and essential existence; however should it not seem now as if the Becoming is only the looming into-view of a struggle of eternal qualities? When we speak of the Becoming, should not the original cause of this be sought in the peculiar feebleness of human cognition — whereas in the nature of things there is perhaps no Becoming, but only a co-existing of many true increate indestructible realities?

These are Heraclitean loop-holes and labyrinths; he exclaims once again: "The 'One' is the 'Many'." The many perceptible qualities are neither eternal entities, nor phantasmata of our senses (Anaxagoras conceives them later on as the former, Parmenides as the latter), they are neither rigid, sovereign "Being" nor fleeting Appearance hovering in human minds. The third possibility which alone was left to Heraclitus nobody will be able to divine with dialectic sagacity and as it were by calculation, for what he invented here is a rarity even in the realm of mystic incredibilities and unexpected cosmic metaphors. — The world is the *Game* of Zeus, or expressed more physically, the game of fire with itself, the "One" is only in this sense at the same time the "Many." —

In order to elucidate in the first place the introduction of fire as a world-shaping force, I recall how Anaximander had further developed the theory of water as the origin of things. Placing confidence in the essential part of Thales' theory, and strengthening and adding to the latter's observations, Anaximander however was not to be convinced that before the water and, as it were, after the water there was no further stage of quality: no, to him out of the Warm and the Cold the Moist seemed to form itself, and the Warm and the Cold therefore were supposed to be the preliminary stages, the still more original qualities. With their issuing forth from the primordial existence of the "Indefinite," Becoming begins. Heraclitus who as physicist subordinated himself to the importance of Anaximander,

explains to himself this Anaximandrian "Warm" as the respiration, the warm breath, the dry vapours, in short as the fiery element: about this fire he now enunciates the same as Thales and Anaximander had enunciated about the water: that in innumerable metamorphoses it was passing along the path of Becoming, especially in the three chief aggregate stages as something Warm, Moist, and Firm. For water in descending is transformed into earth, in ascending into fire: or as Heraclitus appears to have expressed himself more exactly: from the sea ascend only the pure vapours which serve as food to the divine fire of the stars, from the earth only the dark, foggy ones, from which the Moist derives its nourishment. The pure vapours are the transitional stage in the passing of sea into fire, the impure the transitional stage in the passing of earth into water. Thus the two paths of metamorphosis of the fire run continuously side by side, upwards and downwards, to and fro, from fire to water, from water to earth, from earth back again to water, from water to fire. Whereas Heraclitus is a follower of Anaximander in the most important of these conceptions, *e g.,* that the fire is kept up by the evaporations, or herein, that out of the water is dissolved partly earth, partly fire; he is on the other hand quite independent and in opposition to Anaximander in excluding the "Cold" from the physical process, whilst Anaximander had put it side by side with the "Warm" as having the same rights, so as to let the "Moist" originate out of both. To do so, was of course a necessity to Heraclitus, for if everything is to be fire, then, however many possibilities of its transformation might be assumed, nothing can exist that would be the absolute antithesis to fire; he has, therefore, probably interpreted only as a degree of the "Warm" that which is called the "Cold," and he could justify this interpretation without difficulty. Much more important than this deviation from the doctrine of Anaximander is a further agreement; he, like the latter, believes in an end of the world periodically repeating itself and in an ever-renewed emerging of another world out of the all-destroying world-fire. The period during which the world hastens towards that world-fire and the dissolution into pure fire is characterised by him most strikingly as a demand and a need; the state of being completely swallowed up by the fire as satiety; and now to us remains the question as to how he understood and named the newly awakening impulse for world-creation, the pouring-out-of-itself into the forms of plurality. The Greek proverb seems to come to our assistance with the thought that "satiety gives birth to crime" (the Hybris) and one may indeed ask oneself for a minute whether perhaps Heraclitus has derived that return to plurality out of the Hybris. Let us just take this thought seriously: in its light the face of Heraclitus changes before our eyes, the proud gleam of his eyes dies out, a wrinkled expression of painful resignation, of impotence becomes distinct, it seems that we know why later antiquity called him

the “weeping philosopher.” Is not the whole world-process now an act of punishment of the Hybris? The plurality the result of a crime? The transformation of the pure into the impure, the consequence of injustice? Is not the guilt now shifted into the essence of the things and indeed, the world of Becoming and of individuals accordingly exonerated from guilt; yet at the same time are they not condemned for ever and ever to bear the consequences of guilt?

7

That dangerous word, Hybris, is indeed the touchstone for every Heraclitean; here he may show whether he has understood or mistaken his master. Is there in this world: Guilt, injustice, contradiction, suffering?

Yes, exclaims Heraclitus, but only for the limited human being, who sees divergently and not convergently, not for the contuitive god; to him everything opposing converges into one harmony, invisible it is true to the common human eye, yet comprehensible to him who like Heraclitus resembles the contemplative god. Before his fiery eye no drop of injustice is left in the world poured out around him, and even that cardinal obstacle — how pure fire can take up its quarters in forms so impure — he masters by means of a sublime simile. A Becoming and Passing, a building and destroying, without any moral bias, in perpetual innocence is in this world only the play of the artist and of the child. And similarly, just as the child and the artist play, the eternally living fire plays, builds up and destroys, in innocence — and this game the A*Eon* plays with himself. Transforming himself into water and earth, like a child he piles heaps of sand by the sea, piles up and demolishes; from time to time he recommences the game. A moment of satiety, then again desire seizes him, as desire compels the artist to create. Not wantonness, but the ever newly awakening impulse to play, calls into life other worlds. The child throws away his toys; but soon he starts again in an innocent frame of mind. As soon however as the child builds he connects, joins and forms lawfully and according to an innate sense of order.

Thus only is the world contemplated by the aesthetic man, who has learned from the artist and the genesis of the latter’s work, how the struggle of plurality can yet bear within itself law and justice, how the artist stands contemplative above, and working within the work of art, how necessity and play, antagonism and harmony must pair themselves for the procreation of the work of art.

Who now will still demand from such a philosophy a system of Ethics with the necessary imperatives — Thou Shalt, — or even reproach Heraclitus with such a deficiency. Man down to his last fibre is Necessity and absolutely “unfree” — if by freedom one understands the foolish claim to be able to change at will one’s

essentia like a garment, a claim, which up to the present every serious philosophy has rejected with due scorn. That so few human beings live with consciousness in the *Logos* and in accordance with the all-overlooking artist's eye originates from their souls being wet and from the fact that men's eyes and ears, their intellect in general is a bad witness when "moist ooze fills their souls." Why that is so, is not questioned any more than why fire becomes water and earth. Heraclitus is not *compelled* to prove (as Leibnitz was) that this world was even the best of all; it was sufficient for him that the world is the beautiful, innocent play of the AEon. Man on the whole is to him even an irrational being, with which the fact that in all his essence the law of all-ruling reason is fulfilled does not clash. He does not occupy a specially favoured position in nature, whose highest phenomenon is not simple-minded man, but fire, for instance, as stars. In so far as man has through necessity received a share of fire, he is a little more rational; as far as he consists of earth and water it stands badly with his reason. He is not compelled to take cognisance of the *Logos* simply because he is a human being. Why is there water, why earth? This to Heraclitus is a much more serious problem than to ask, why men are so stupid and bad. In the highest and the most perverted men the same inherent lawfulness and justice manifest themselves.

If however one would ask Heraclitus the question "Why is fire not always fire, why is it now water, now earth?" then he would only just answer: "It is a game, don't take it too pathetically and still less, morally." Heraclitus describes only the existing world and has the same contemplative pleasure in it which the artist experiences when looking at his growing work. Only those who have cause to be discontented with his natural history of man find him gloomy, melancholy, tearful, sombre, atrabilarious, pessimistic and altogether hateful. He however would take these discontented people, together with their antipathies and sympathies, their hatred and their love, as negligible and perhaps answer them with some such comment as: "Dogs bark at anything they do not know," or, "To the ass chaff is preferable to gold."

With such discontented persons also originate the numerous complaints as to the obscurity of the Heraclitean style; probably no man has ever written clearer and more illuminatingly; of course, very abruptly, and therefore naturally obscure to the racing readers. But why a philosopher should intentionally write obscurely — a thing habitually said about Heraclitus — is absolutely inexplicable; unless he has some cause to hide his thoughts or is sufficiently a rogue to conceal his thoughtlessness underneath words. One is, as Schopenhauer says, indeed compelled by lucid expression to prevent misunderstandings even in affairs of practical every-day life, how then should one be allowed to express oneself indistinctly, indeed puzzlingly in the most difficult, most abstruse, scarcely

attainable object of thinking, the tasks of philosophy? With respect to brevity however Jean Paul gives a good precept: “On the whole it is right that everything great — of deep meaning to a rare mind — should be uttered with brevity and (therefore) obscurely so that the paltry mind would rather proclaim it to be nonsense than translate it into the realm of his empty-headedness. For common minds have an ugly ability to perceive in the deepest and richest saying nothing but their own every-day opinion.” Moreover and in spite of it Heraclitus has not escaped the “paltry minds”; already the Stoics have “re-expounded” him into the shallow and dragged down his aesthetic fundamental-perception as to the play of the world to the miserable level of the common regard for the practical ends of the world and more explicitly for the advantages of man, so that out of his Physics has arisen in those heads a crude optimism, with the continual invitation to Dick, Tom, and Harry, “*Plaudite amici!*”

8

Heraclitus was proud; and if it comes to pride with a philosopher then it is a great pride. His work never refers him to a “public,” the applause of the masses and the hailing chorus of contemporaries. To wander lonely along his path belongs to the nature of the philosopher. His talents are the most rare, in a certain sense the most unnatural and at the same time exclusive and hostile even toward kindred talents. The wall of his self-sufficiency must be of diamond, if it is not to be demolished and broken, for everything is in motion against him. His journey to immortality is more cumbersome and impeded than any other and yet nobody can believe more firmly than the philosopher that he will attain the goal by that journey — because he does not know where he is to stand if not on the widely spread wings of all time; for the disregard of everything present and momentary lies in the essence of the great philosophic nature. He has truth; the wheel of time may roll whither it pleases, never can it escape from truth. It is important to hear that such men have lived. Never for example would one be able to imagine the pride of Heraclitus as an idle possibility. In itself every endeavour after knowledge seems by its nature to be eternally unsatisfied and unsatisfactory. Therefore nobody unless instructed by history will like to believe in such a royal self-esteem and conviction of being the only wooer of truth. Such men live in their own solar-system — one has to look for them there. A Pythagoras, an Empedocles treated themselves too with a superhuman esteem, yea, with almost religious awe; but the tie of sympathy united with the great conviction of the metempsychosis and the unity of everything living, led them back to other men, for their welfare and salvation. Of that feeling of solitude, however, which permeated the Ephesian recluse of the

Artemis Temple, one can only divine something, when growing benumbed in the wildest mountain desert. No paramount feeling of compassionate agitation, no desire to help, heal and save emanates from him. He is a star without an atmosphere. His eye, 'directed blazingly inwards, looks outward, for appearance's sake only, extinct and icy. All around him, immediately upon the citadel of his pride beat the waves of folly and perversity: with loathing he turns away from them. But men with a feeling heart would also shun such a Gorgon monster as cast out of brass; within an out-of-the-way sanctuary, among the statues of gods, by the side of cold composedly-sublime architecture such a being may appear more comprehensible. As man among men Heraclitus was incredible; and though he was seen paying attention to the play of noisy children, even then he was reflecting upon what never man thought of on such an occasion: the play of the great world-child, Zeus. He had no need of men, not even for his discernments. He was not interested in all that which one might perhaps ascertain from them, and in what the other sages before him had been endeavouring to ascertain. He spoke with disdain of such questioning, collecting, in short "historic" men. "I sought and investigated myself," he said, with a word by which one designates the investigation of an oracle; as if he and no one else were the true fulfiller and achiever of the Delphic precept: "Know thyself."

What he learned from this oracle, he deemed immortal wisdom, and eternally worthy of explanation, of unlimited effect even in the distance, after the model of the prophetic speeches of the Sibyl. It is sufficient for the latest mankind: let the latter have that expounded to her, as oracular sayings, which he like the Delphic god "neither enunciates nor conceals." Although it is proclaimed by him, "without smiles, finery and the scent of ointments," but rather as with "foaming mouth," it *must* force its way through the millenniums of the future. For 8 the world needs truth eternally, therefore she needs also Heraclitus eternally; although he has no need of her. What does his fame matter to *him?* — fame with "mortals ever flowing on!" as he exclaims scornfully. His fame is of concern to man, not to himself; the immortality of mankind needs him, not he the immortality of the man Heraclitus. That which he beheld, *the doctrine of the Law in the Becoming, and of the Play in the Necessity,* must henceforth be beheld eternally; he has raised the curtain of this greatest stage-play.

9

Whereas in every word of Heraclitus are expressed the pride and the majesty of truth, but of truth caught by intuitions, not scaled by the rope-ladder of Logic, whereas in sublime ecstasy he beholds but does not espy, discerns but does not

reckon, he is contrasted with his contemporary *Parmenides,* a man likewise with the type of a prophet of truth, but formed as it were out of ice and not out of fire, and shedding around himself cold, piercing light.

Parmenides once had, probably in his later years, a moment of the very purest abstraction, undimmed by any reality, perfectly lifeless; this moment — un-Greek, like no other in the two centuries of the Tragic Age — the product of which is the doctrine of "Being," became a boundary-stone for his own life, which divided it into two periods; at the same time however the same moment divides the pre-Socratic thinking into two halves, of which the first might be called the Anaximandrian, the second the Parmenidean. The first period in Parmenides' own philosophising bears still the signature of Anaximander; this period produced a detailed philosophic-physical system as answer to Anaximander's questions. When later that icy abstraction-horror caught him, and the simplest proposition treating of "Being" and "Not-Being" was advanced by him, then among the many older doctrines thrown by him upon the scrap heap was also his own system. However he does not appear to have lost all paternal piety towards the strong and well-shapen child of his youth, and he saved himself therefore by saying: "It is true there is only one right way; if one however wants at any time to betake oneself to another, then my earlier opinion according to its purity and consequence alone is right." Sheltering himself with this phrase he has allowed his former physical system a worthy and extensive space in his great poem on Nature, which really was to proclaim the new discernment as the only signpost to truth. This fatherly regard, even though an error should have crept in through it, is a remainder of human feeling, in a nature quite petrified by logical rigidity and almost changed into a thinking-machine.

Parmenides, whose personal intercourse with Anaximander does not seem incredible to me, and whose starting from Anaximander's doctrine is not only credible but evident, had the same distrust for the complete separation of a world which only is, and a world which only becomes, as had also caught Heraclitus and led to a denying of "Being" altogether. Both sought a way out from that contrast and divergence of a dual order of the world. That leap into the Indefinite, Indefinable, by which once for all Anaximander had escaped from the realm of Becoming and from the empirically given qualities of such realm, that leap did not become an easy matter to minds so independently fashioned as those of Heraclitus and Parmenides; first they endeavoured to walk as far as they could and reserved to themselves the leap for that place, where the foot finds no more hold and one has to leap, in order not to fall. Both looked repeatedly at that very world, which Anaximander had condemned in so melancholy a way and declared to be the place of wanton crime and at the same time the penitentiary cell for the

injustice of Becoming. Contemplating this world Heraclitus, as we know already, had discovered what a wonderful order, regularity and security manifest themselves in every Becoming; from that he concluded that the Becoming could not be anything evil and unjust. Quite a different outlook had Parmenides; he compared the qualities one with another, and believed that they were not all of the same kind, but ought to be classified under two headings. If for example he compared bright and dark, then the second quality was obviously only the *negation* of the first; and thus he distinguished positive and negative qualities, seriously endeavouring to rediscover and register that fundamental antithesis in the whole realm of Nature. His method was the following: He took a few antitheses, *e g.,* light and heavy, rare and dense, active and passive, and compared them with that typical antithesis of bright and dark: that which corresponded with the bright was the positive, that which corresponded with the dark the negative quality. If he took perhaps the heavy and light, the light fell to the side of the bright, the heavy to the side of the dark; and thus "heavy" was to him only the negation of "light," but the "light" a positive quality. This method alone shows that he had a defiant aptitude for abstract logical procedure, closed against the suggestions of the senses. The "heavy "seems indeed to offer itself very forcibly to the senses as a positive quality; that did not keep Parmenides from stamping it as a negation. Similarly he placed the earth in opposition to the fire, the "cold" in opposition to the "warm," the "dense" in opposition to the "rare," the "female" in opposition to the "male," the "passive" in opposition to the "active," merely as negations: so that before his gaze our empiric world divided itself into two separate spheres, into that of the positive qualities — with a bright, fiery, warm, light, rare, active-masculine character — and into that of the negative qualities. The latter express really only the lack, the absence of the others, the positive ones. He therefore described the sphere in which the positive qualities are absent as dark, earthy, cold, heavy, dense and altogether as of feminine-passive character. Instead of the expressions "positive" and "negative" he used the standing term "existent" and "non-existent" and had arrived with this at the proposition, that, in contradiction to Anaximander, this our world itself contains something "existent," and of course something "nonexistent." One is not to seek that "existent" outside the world and as it were above our horizon; but before us, and everywhere in every Becoming, something "existent" and active is contained.

With that however still remained to him the task of giving the more exact answer to the question: What is the Becoming? and here was the moment where he had to leap, in order not to fall, although perhaps to such natures as that of Parmenides, even any leaping means a falling. Enough! we get into fog, into the mysticism of *qualitates occultae*, and even a little into mythology. Parmenides,

like Heraclitus, looks at the general Becoming and Not-remaining and explains to himself a Passing only thus, that the "Non-Existent" bore the guilt. For how should the "Existent" bear the guilt of Passing? Likewise, however, the Originating, *i.e.,* the Becoming, must come about through the assistance of the "Non-Existent"; for the "Existent" is always there and could not of itself first originate and it could not explain any Originating, any Becoming. Therefore the Originating, the Becoming as well as the Passing and Perishing have been brought about by the negative qualities. But that the originating "thing" has a content and the passing "thing" loses a content, presupposes that the positive qualities — and that just means that very content — participate likewise in both processes. In short the proposition results: "For the Becoming the 'Existent' as well as the 'Non-Existent' is necessary; when they co-operate then a Becoming results." But how come the "positive" and the "negative" to one another? Should they not on the contrary eternally flee one another as antitheses and thereby make every Becoming impossible? Here Parmenides appeals to a *qualitas occulta*, to a mystic tendency of the antithetical pairs to approach and attract one another, and he allegorises that peculiar contrariety by the name of Aphrodite, and by the empirically known relation of the male and female principle. It is the power of Aphrodite which plays the matchmaker between the antithetical pair, the "Existent" and the "Non-Existent." Passion brings together the antagonistic and antipathetic elements: the result is a Becoming. When Desire has become satiated, Hatred and the innate antagonism again drive asunder the "Existent" and the "Non-Existent" — then man says: the thing perishes, passes.

10

But no one with impunity lays his profane hands on such awful abstractions as the "Existent" and the "Non-Existent"; the blood freezes slowly as one touches them. There was a day upon which an odd idea suddenly occurred to Parmenides, an idea which seemed to take all value away from his former combinations, so that he felt inclined to throw them aside, like a money bag with old worn-out coins. It is commonly believed that an external impression, in addition to the centrifugal consequence of such ideas as "existent" and "non-existent," has also been co-active in the invention of that day; this impression was an acquaintance with the theology of the old roamer and rhapsodist, the singer of a mystic deification of Nature, the Kolophonian *Xenophanes*. Throughout an extraordinary life Xenophanes lived as a wandering poet and became through his travels a well-informed and most instructive man who knew how to question and how to narrate, for which reason Heraclitus reckoned him amongst the polyhistorians and

above all amongst the "historic" natures, in the sense mentioned. Whence and when came to him the mystic bent into the One and the eternally Resting, nobody will be able to compute; perhaps it is only the conception of the finally settled old man, to whom, after the agitation of his erratic wanderings, and after the restless learning and searching for truth, the vision of a divine rest, the permanence of all things within a pantheistic primal peace appears as *the* highest and greatest ideal. After all it seems to me quite accidental that in the same place in Elea two men lived together for a time, each of whom carried in his head a conception of unity; they formed no school and had nothing in common which perhaps the one might have learned from the other and then might have handed on. For, in the case of these two men, the origin of that conception of unity is quite different, yea opposite; and if either of them has become at all acquainted with the doctrine of the other then, in order to understand it at all, he had to translate it first into his own language. With this translation however the very specific element of the other doctrine was lost. Whereas Parmenides arrived at the unity of the "Existent" purely through an alleged logical consequence and whereas he span that unity out of the ideas "Being" and "Not-Being," Xenophanes was a religious mystic and belonged, with that mystic unity, very properly to the Sixth Century. Although he was no such revolutionising personality as Pythagoras he had nevertheless in his wanderings the same bent and impulse to improve, purify, and cure men. He was the ethical teacher, but still in the stage of the rhapsodist; in a later time he would have been a sophist. In the daring disapproval of the existing customs and valuations he had not his equal in Greece; moreover he did not, like Heraclitus and Plato, retire into solitude but placed himself before the very public, whose exulting admiration of Homer, whose passionate propensity for the honours of the gymnastic festivals, whose adoration of stones in human shape, he criticised severely with wrath and scorn, yet not as a brawling Thersites. The freedom of the individual was with him on its zenith; and by this almost limitless stepping free from all conventions he was more closely related to Parmenides than by that last divine unity, which once he had beheld, in a visionary state worthy of that century. His unity scarcely had expression and word in common with the one "Being" of Parmenides, and certainly had not the same origin.

It was rather an opposite state of mind in which Parmenides found his doctrine of "Being," On that day and in that state he examined his two co-operating antitheses, the "Existent" and the "Non-Existent," the positive and the negative qualities, of which Desire and Hatred constitute the world and the Becoming. He was suddenly caught up, mistrusting, by the idea of negative quality, of the "Non-Existent." For can something which does not exist be a quality? or to put the question in a broader sense: can anything indeed which does not exist, exist? The

only form of knowledge in which we at once put unconditional trust and the disapproval of which amounts to madness, is the tautology A = A. But this very tautological knowledge called inexorably to him: what does not exist, exists not! What is, is!

Suddenly he feels upon his life the load of an enormous logical sin; for had he not always without hesitation assumed that *there were existing* negative qualities, in short a "Non-Existent," that therefore, to express it by a formula, A = Not-A, which indeed could only be advanced by the most out and out perversity of thinking. It is true, as he recollected, the whole great mass of men judge with the same perversity; he himself has only participated in the general crime against logic. But the same moment which charges him with this crime surrounds him with the light of the glory of an invention, he has found, apart from all human illusion, a principle, the key to the world-secret, he now descends into the abyss of things, guided by the firm and fearful hand of the tautological truth as to "Being."

On the way thither he meets Heraclitus — an unfortunate encounter! Just now Heraclitus' play with antinomies was bound to be very hateful to him, who placed the utmost importance upon the severest separation of "Being" and "Not-Being"; propositions like this: "We are and at the same time we are not"—"'Being' and 'Not-Being' is at the same time the same thing and again not the same thing," propositions through which all that he had just elucidated and disentangled became again dim and inextricable, incited him to wrath. "Away with the men," he exclaimed, "who seem to have two heads and yet know nothing! With them truly everything is in flux, even their thinking! They stare at things stupidly, but they must be deaf as well as blind so to mix up the opposites"! The want of judgment on the part of the masses, glorified by playful antinomies and praised as the acme of all knowledge was to him a painful and incomprehensible experience.

Now he dived into the cold bath of his awful abstractions. That which is true must exist in eternal presence, about it cannot be said "it was,"

"it will be." The "Existent" cannot have become; for out of what should it have become? Out of the "Non-Existent"? But that does not exist and can produce nothing. Out of the "Existent"? This would not produce anything but itself. The same applies to the Passing, it is just as impossible as the Becoming, as any change, any increase, any decrease. On the whole the proposition is valid: Everything about which it can be said: "it has been" or "it will be" does not exist; about the "Existent" however it can never be said "it does not exist." The "Existent" is indivisible, for where is the second power, which should divide it? It is immovable, for whither should it move itself? It cannot be infinitely great nor infinitely small, for it is perfect and a perfectly given infinitude is a contradiction.

Thus the "Existent" is suspended, delimited, perfect, immovable, everywhere equally balanced and such equilibrium equally perfect at any point, like a globe, but not in a space, for otherwise this space would be a second "Existent." But there cannot exist several "Existents," for in order to separate them, something would have to exist which was not existing, an assumption which neutralises itself. Thus there exists only the eternal Unity.

If now, however, Parmenides turned back his gaze to the world of Becoming, the existence of which he had formerly tried to understand by such ingenious conjectures, he was wroth at his eye seeing the Becoming at all, his ear hearing it. "Do not follow the dim-sighted eyes," now his command runs, "not the resounding ear nor the tongue, but examine only by the power of the thought." Therewith he accomplished the extremely important first critique of the apparatus of knowledge, although this critique was still inadequate and proved disastrous in its consequences. By tearing entirely asunder the senses and the ability to think in abstractions, *i e* reason, just as if they were two thoroughly separate capacities, he demolished the intellect itself, and incited people to that wholly erroneous separation of "mind" and "body" which, especially since Plato, lies like a curse on philosophy. All sense perceptions, Parmenides judges, cause only illusions and their chief illusion is their deluding us to believe that even the "Non-Existent" exists, that even the Becoming has a "Being." All that plurality, diversity and variety of the empirically known world, the change of its qualities, the order in its ups and downs, is thrown aside mercilessly as mere appearance and delusion; from there nothing is to be learnt, therefore all labour is wasted which one bestows upon this false, through-and-through futile world, the conception of which has been obtained by being humbugged by the senses. He who judges in such generalisations as Parmenides did, ceases therewith to be an investigator of natural philosophy in detail; his interest in phenomena withers away; there develops even a hatred of being unable to get rid of this eternal fraud of the senses. Truth is now to dwell only in the most faded, most abstract generalities, in the empty husks of the most indefinite words, as in a maze of cobwebs; and by such a "truth" now the philosopher sits, bloodless as an abstraction and surrounded by a web of formulae. The spider undoubtedly wants the blood of its victims; but the Parmenidean philosopher hates the very blood of his victims, the blood of Empiricism sacrificed by him.

11

And that was a Greek who "flourished" about the time of the outbreak of the Ionic Revolution. At that time it was possible for a Greek to flee out of the

superabundant reality, as out of a mere delusive schematism of the imaginative faculties — not perhaps like Plato into the land of the eternal ideas, into the workshop of the world-creator, in order to feast the eyes on unblemished, unbreakable primal-forms of things — but into the rigid death-like rest of the coldest and emptiest conception, that of the "Being." We will indeed beware of interpreting such a remarkable fact by false analogies. That flight was not a world-flight in the sense of Indian philosophers; no deep religious conviction as to the depravity, transitoriness and accursedness of Existence demanded that flight — that ultimate goal, the rest in the "Being," was not striven after as the mystic absorption in *one* all-sufficing enrapturing conception which is a puzzle and a scandal to common men. The thought of Parmenides bears in itself not the slightest trace of the intoxicating mystical Indian fragrance, which is perhaps not wholly imperceptible in Pythagoras and Empedocles; the strange thing in that fact, at this period, is rather the very absence of fragrance, colour, soul, form, the total lack of blood, religiosity and ethical warmth, the abstract-schematic — in a Greek! — above all however our philosopher's awful energy of striving after *Certainty,* in a mythically thinking and highly emotional - fantastic age is quite remarkable. "Grant me but a certainty, ye gods!" is the prayer of Parmenides, "and be it, in the ocean of Uncertainty, only a board, broad enough to lie on! Everything becoming, everything luxuriant, varied, blossoming, deceiving, stimulating, living, take all that for yourselves, and give to me but the single poor empty Certainty!"

In the philosophy of Parmenides the theme of ontology forms the prelude. Experience offered him nowhere a "Being" as he imagined it to himself, but from the fact that he could conceive of it he concluded that it must exist; a conclusion which rests upon the supposition that we have an organ of knowledge which reaches into the nature of things and is independent of experience. The material of our thinking according to Parmenides does not exist in perception at all but is brought in from somewhere else, from an extra-material world to which by thinking we have a direct access. Against all similar chains of reasoning Aristotle has already asserted that existence never belongs to the essence, never belongs to the nature of a thing. For that very reason from the idea of "Being" — of which the *essentia* precisely is only the "Being" — cannot be inferred an *existentia* of the "Being" at all. The logical content of that antithesis "Being" and "Not-Being" is perfectly nil, if the object lying at the bottom of it, if the precept cannot be given from which this antithesis has been deduced by abstraction; without this going back to the precept the antithesis is only a play with conceptions, through which indeed nothing is discerned. For the merely logical criterion of truth, as Kant teaches, namely the agreement of a discernment with the general and the

formal laws of intellect and reason is, it is true, the *conditio sine qua non,* consequently the negative condition of all truth; further however logic cannot go, and logic cannot discover by any touchstone the error which pertains not to the form but to the contents. As soon, however, as one seeks the content for the logical truth of the antithesis: "That which is, is; that which is not, is not," one will find indeed not a simple reality, which is fashioned rigidly according to that antithesis: about a tree I can say as well "it is" in comparison with all the other things, as well "it becomes" in comparison with itself at another moment of time as finally also "it is not," *e g.,* "it is not yet tree," as long as I perhaps look at the shrub. Words are only symbols for the relations of things among themselves and to us, and nowhere touch absolute truth; and now to crown all, the word "Being" designates only the most general relation, which connects all things, and so does the word "Not-Being." If however the Existence of the things themselves be unprovable then the relation of the things among themselves, the so-called "Being" and "Not-Being," will not bring us any nearer to the land of truth. By means of words and ideas we shall never get behind the wall of the relations, let us say into some fabulous primal cause of things, and even in the pure forms of the sensitive faculty and of the intellect, in space, time and causality we gain nothing, which might resemble a "*veritas oeterna.*" It is absolutely impossible for the subject to see and discern something beyond himself, so impossible that Cognition and "Being" are the most contradictory of all spheres. And if in the uninstructed *naivete* of the then critique of the intellect Parmenides was permitted to fancy that out of the eternally subjective idea he had come to a "Being-In-itself," then it is to-day, after Kant, a daring ignorance, if here and there, especially among badly informed theologians who want to play the philosopher, is proposed as the task of philosophy: "to conceive the Absolute by means of consciousness," perhaps even in the form: "the Absolute is already extant, else how could it be sought?" as Hegel has expressed himself, or with the saying of Beneke: "that the 'Being' must be given somehow, must be attainable for us somehow, since otherwise we could not even have the idea of 'Being.'" The idea of Being"! As though that idea did not indicate the most miserable empiric origin already in the etymology of the word. For *esse* means at the bottom: "to breathe," if man uses it of all other things, then he transmits the conviction that he himself breathes and lives by means of a metaphor, *i.e.,* by means of something illogical to the other things and conceives of their Existence as a Breathing according to human analogy. Now the original meaning of the word soon becomes effaced; so much however still remains that man conceives of the existence of other things according to the analogy of his own existence, therefore anthropomorphically, and at any rate by means of an illogical transmission. Even to man, therefore apart

from that transmission, the proposition: “I breathe, therefore a ‘Being’ exists” is quite insufficient since against it the same objection must be made, as against the *ambulo*, *ergo sum*, or *ergo est.*

12

The other idea, of greater import than that of the “Existent,” and likewise invented already by Parmenides, although not yet so clearly applied as by his disciple Zeno is the idea of the Infinite. Nothing Infinite can exist; for from such an assumption the contradictory idea of a perfect Infinitude would result. Since now our actuality, our existing world everywhere shows the character of that perfect Infinitude, our world signifies in its nature a contradiction against logic and therewith also against reality and is deception, lie, fantasma. Zeno especially applied the method of indirect proof; he said for example, “There can be no motion from one place to another; for if there were such a motion, then an Infinitude would be given as perfect, this however is an impossibility.” Achilles cannot catch up the tortoise which has a small start in a race, for in order to reach only the point from which the tortoise began, he would have had to run through innumerable, infinitely many spaces, viz., first half of that space, then the fourth, then the sixteenth, and so on *ad infinitum.* If he does in fact overtake the tortoise then this is an illogical phenomenon, and therefore at any rate not a truth, not a reality, not real “Being,” but only a delusion. For it is never possible to finish the infinite. Another popular expression of this doctrine is the flying and yet resting arrow. At any instant of its flight it has a position; in this position it rests. Now would the sum of the infinite positions of rest be identical with motion? Would now the Resting, infinitely often repeated, be Motion, therefore its own opposite? The Infinite is here used as the *aqua fortis* of reality, through it the latter is dissolved. If however the Ideas are fixed, eternal and entitative — and for Parmenides “Being” and Thinking coincide — if therefore the Infinite can never be perfect, if Rest can never become Motion, then in fact the arrow has not flown at all; it never left its place and resting position; no moment of time has passed. Or expressed in another way: in this so-called yet only alleged Actuality there exists neither time, nor space, nor motion. Finally the arrow itself is only an illusion; for it originates out of the Plurality, out of the phantasmagoria of the “Non-One” produced by the senses. Suppose the arrow had a “Being,” then it would be immovable, timeless, increate, rigid and eternal — an impossible conception! Supposing that Motion was truly real, then there would be no rest, therefore no position for the arrow, therefore no space — an impossible conception! Supposing that time were real, then it could not be of an infinite

divisibility; the time which the arrow needed, would have to consist of a limited number of time-moments, each of these moments would have to be an *Atomon* — an impossible conception! All our conceptions, as soon as their empirically-given content, drawn out of this concrete world, is taken as a *veritas (oeterna,* lead to contradictions. If there is absolute motion, then there is no space; if there is absolute space then there is no motion; if there is absolute "Being," then there is no Plurality; if there is an absolute Plurality, then there is no Unity. It should at least become clear to *us* how little we touch the heart of things or untie the knot of reality with such ideas, whereas Parmenides and Zeno inversely hold fast to the truth and omnivalidity of ideas and condemn the perceptible world as the opposite of the true and omnivalid ideas, as an objectivation of the illogical and contradictory. With all their proofs they start from the wholly undemonstrable, yea improbable assumption that in that apprehensive faculty we possess the decisive, highest criterion of "Being" and "Not-Being," *i.e.,* of objective reality and its opposite; those ideas are not to prove themselves true, to correct themselves by Actuality, as they are after all really derived from it, but on the contrary they are to measure and to judge Actuality, and in case of a contradiction with logic, even to condemn. In order to concede to them this judicial competence Parmenides had to ascribe to them the same "Being," which alone he allowed in general as *the* "Being"; Thinking and that one increate perfect ball of the "Existent" were now no longer to be conceived as two different kinds of "Being," since there was not permitted a duality of "Being." Thus the over-risky flash of fancy had become necessary to declare Thinking and "Being" identical. No form of perceptibility, no symbol, no simile could possibly be of any help here; the fancy was wholly inconceivable, but it was necessary, yea in the lack of every possibility of illustration it celebrated the highest triumph over the world and the claims of the senses. Thinking and that clod-like, ball-shaped, through-and-through dead-massive, and rigid-immovable "Being," must, according to the Parmenidean imperative, dissolve into one another and be the same in every respect, to the horror of fantasy. What does it matter that this identity contradicts the senses! This contradiction is just the guarantee that such an identity is not borrowed from the senses.

13

Moreover against Parmenides could be produced a strong couple of *argumenta ad hominem* or *ex concessis,* by which, it is true, truth itself could not be brought to light, but at any rate the untruth of that absolute separation of the world of the senses and the world of the ideas, and the untruth of the identity of "Being" and

Thinking could be demonstrated. Firstly, if the Thinking of Reason in ideas is real, then also Plurality and Motion must have reality, for rational Thinking is mobile; and more precisely, it is a motion from idea to idea, therefore within a plurality of realities. There is no subterfuge against that; it is quite impossible to designate Thinking as a rigid Permanence, as an eternally immobile, intellectual Introspection of Unity. Secondly, if only fraud and illusion come from the senses, and if in reality there exists only the real identity of "Being "and Thinking, what then are the senses themselves? They too are certainly Appearance only since they do not coincide with the Thinking, and their product, the world of senses, does not coincide with "Being." If however the senses themselves are Appearance to whom then are they Appearance? How can they, being unreal, still deceive? The "Non-Existent "cannot even deceive. Therefore the Whence? of deception and Appearance remains an enigma, yea, a contradiction. We call these *argumenta ad hominem:* The Objection Of The Mobile Reason and that of The Origin Of Appearance. From the first would result the reality of Motion and of Plurality, from the second the impossibility of the Parmenidean Appearance, assuming that the chief-doctrine of Parmenides on the "Being" were accepted as true. This chief-doctrine however only says: The "Existent" only has a "Being," the "Non-Existent" does not exist. If Motion however has such a "Being," then to Motion applies what applies to the "Existent" in general: it is increate, eternal, indestructible, without increase or decrease. But if the "Appearance" is denied and a belief in it made untenable, by means of that question as to the Whence? of the "Appearance," if the stage of the so-called Becoming, of change, our many-shaped, restless, coloured and rich Existence is protected from the Parmenidean rejection, then it is necessary to characterise this world of change and alteration as a *sum* of such really existing Essentials, existing simultaneously into all eternity. Of a change in the strict sense, of a Becoming there cannot naturally be any question even with this assumption. But now Plurality has a real "Being," all qualities have a real "Being" and motion not less; and of any moment of this world — although these moments chosen at random lie at a distance of millenniums from one another — it would have to be possible to say: all real Essentials extant in this world are without exception co-existent, unaltered, undiminished, without increase, without decrease. A millennium later the world is exactly the same. Nothing has altered. If in spite of that the appearance of the world at the one time is quite different from that at the other time, then that is no deception, nothing merely apparent, but the effect of eternal motion. The real "Existent" is moved sometimes thus, sometimes thus: together, asunder, upwards, downwards, into one another, pell-mell.

With this conception we have already taken a step into the realm of the doctrine of *Anaxagoras*. By him both objections against Parmenides are raised in full strength; that of the mobile Thinking and that of the Whence? of "Appearance"; but in the chief proposition Parmenides has subjugated him as well as all the younger philosophers and nature-explorers. They all deny the possibility of Becoming and Passing, as the mind of the people conceives them and as Anaximander and Heraclitus had assumed with greater circumspection and yet still heedlessly. Such a mythological Originating out of the Nothing, such a Disappearing into the Nothing, such an arbitrary Changing of the Nothing into the Something, such a random exchanging, putting on and putting off of the qualities was henceforth considered senseless; but so was, and for the same reasons, an originating of the Many out of the One, of the manifold qualities out of the one primal-quality, in short the derivation of the world out of a primary substance, as argued by Thales and Heraclitus. Rather was now the real problem advanced of applying the doctrine of increate imperishable "Being" to this existing world, without taking one's refuge in the theory of appearance and deception. But if the empiric world is not to be Appearance, if the things are not to be derived out of Nothing and just as little out of the one Something, then these things must contain in themselves a real "Being," their matter and content must be unconditionally real, and all change can refer only to the form, *i.e.,* to the position, order, grouping, mixing, separation of these eternally co-existing Essentials. It is just as in a game of dice; they are ever the same dice; but falling sometimes thus, sometimes thus, they mean to us something different. All older theories had gone back to a primal element, as womb and cause of Becoming, be this water, air, fire or the Indefinite of Anaximander. Against that Anaxagoras now asserts that out of the Equal the Unequal could never come forth, and that out of the one "Existent" the change could never be explained. Whether now one were to imagine that assumed matter to be rarefied or condensed, one would never succeed by such a condensation or rarefaction in explaining the problem one would like to explain: the plurality of qualities. But if the world in fact is full of the most different qualities then these must, in case they are not appearance, have a "Being," *i.e.,* must be eternal, increate, imperishable and ever coexisting. Appearance, however, they cannot be, since the question as to the Whence? of Appearance remains unanswered, yea answers itself in the negative! The earlier seekers after Truth had intended to simplify the problem of Becoming by advancing only one substance, which bore in its bosom the possibilities of all Becoming; now on the contrary it is asserted: there are innumerable substances, but never more, never less, and

never new ones. Only Motion, playing dice with them throws them into ever new combinations. That Motion however is a truth and not Appearance, Anaxagoras proved in opposition to Parmenides by the indisputable succession of our conceptions in thinking. We have therefore in the most direct fashion the insight into the truth of motion and succession in the fact that we think and have conceptions. Therefore at any rate the *one* rigid, resting, dead "Being "of Parmenides has been removed out of the way, there are many "Existents" just as surely as all these many "Existents" (existing things, substances) are in motion. Change is motion — but whence originates motion? Does this motion leave perhaps wholly untouched the proper essence of those many independent, isolated substances, and, according to the most severe idea of the "Existent," *must* not motion in itself be foreign to them? Or does it after all belong to the things themselves? We stand here at an important decision; according to which way we turn, we shall step into the realm either of Anaxagoras or of Empedocles or of Democritus. The delicate question must be raised: if there are many substances, and if these many move, what moves them? Do they move one another? Or is it perhaps only gravitation? Or are there magic forces of attraction and repulsion within the things themselves? Or does the cause of motion lie outside these many real substances? Or putting the question more pointedly: if two things show a succession, a mutual change of position, does that originate from themselves? And is this to be explained mechanically or magically? Or if this should not be the case is it a third something which moves them? It is a sorry problem, for Parmenides would still have been able to prove against Anaxagoras the impossibility of motion, even granted that there are many substances. For he could say: Take two Substances existing of themselves, each with quite differently fashioned, autonomous, unconditioned "Being" — and of such kind are the Anaxagorean substances — they can never clash together, never move, never attract one another, there exists between them no causality, no bridge, they do not come into contact with one another, do not disturb one another, they do not interest one another, they are utterly indifferent. The impact then is just as inexplicable as the magic attraction: that which is utterly foreign cannot exercise any effect upon another, therefore cannot move itself nor allow itself to be moved. Parmenides would even have added: the only way of escape which is left to you is this, to ascribe motion to the things themselves; then however all that you know and see as motion is indeed only a deception and not true motion, for the only kind of motion which could belong to those absolutely original substances, would be merely an autogenous motion limited to themselves without any effect. But you *assume* motion in order to explain those effects of change, of the disarrangement in space, of alteration, in short the causalities and relations of the

things among themselves. But these very effects would not be explained and would remain as problematic as ever; for this reason one cannot conceive why it should be necessary to assume a motion since it does not perform that which you demand from it. Motion does not belong to the nature of things and is eternally foreign to them.

Those opponents of the Eleatean unmoved Unity were induced to make light of such an argument by prejudices of a perceptual character. It seems so irrefutable that each veritable "Existent" is a spacefilling body, a lump of matter, large or small but in any case spacially dimensioned; so that two or more such lumps cannot be in one space. Under this hypothesis Anaxagoras, as later on Democritus, assumed that they must knock against each other; if in their motions they came by chance upon one another, that they would dispute the same space with each other, and that this struggle was the very cause of all Change. In other words: those wholly isolated, thoroughly heterogeneous and eternally unalterable substances were after all not conceived as being absolutely heterogeneous but all had in addition to a specific, wholly peculiar quality, also one absolutely homogeneous substratum: a piece of space-filling matter. In their participation in matter they all stood equal and therefore could act upon one another, i. — *e.,* knock one another. Moreover all Change did not in the least depend on the heterogeneity of those substances but on their homogeneity, as matter. At the bottom of the assumption of Anaxagoras is a logical oversight; for that which is *the* "Existent-In-Itself" must be wholly unconditional and coherent, is therefore not allowed to assume as its cause anything, — whereas all those Anaxagorean substances have still a conditioning Something: matter, and already assume its existence; the substance "Red" for example was to Anaxagoras not just merely red in itself but also in a reserved or suppressed way a piece of matter without any qualities. Only with this matter the "Red-In-Itself" acted upon other substances, not with the "Red," but with that which is not red, not coloured, nor in any way qualitatively definite. If the "Red" had been taken strictly as "Red," as the real substance itself, therefore without that substratum, then Anaxagoras would certainly not have dared to speak of an effect of the "Red" upon other substances, perhaps even with the phrase that the "Red-In-Itself" was transmitting the impact received from the "Fleshy-In-Itself." Then it would be clear that such an "Existent" *par excellence* could never be moved.

15

One has to glance at the opponents of the Eleates, in order to appreciate the extraordinary advantages in the assumption of Parmenides. What

embarrassments, — from which Parmenides had escaped, — awaited Anaxagoras and all who believed in a plurality of substances, with the question, How many substances? Anaxagoras made the leap, closed his eyes and said, "Infinitely many"; thus he had flown at least beyond the incredibly laborious proof of a definite number of elementary substances. Since these "Infinitely Many" had to exist without increase and unaltered for eternities, in that assumption was given the contradiction of an infinity to be conceived as completed and perfect. In short, Plurality, Motion, Infinity driven into flight by Parmenides with the amazing proposition of the one "Being," returned from their exile and hurled their projectiles at the opponents of Parmenides, causing them wounds for which there is no cure. Obviously those opponents have no real consciousness and knowledge as to the awful force of those Eleatean thoughts, "There can be no time, no motion, no space; for all these we can only think of as infinite, and to be more explicit, firstly infinitely large, then infinitely divisible; but everything infinite has no 'Being,' does not exist," and this nobody doubts, who takes the meaning of the word "Being" severely and considers the existence of something contradictory impossible, *e g.,* the existence of a completed infinity. If however the very Actuality shows us everything under the form of the completed infinity then it becomes evident that it contradicts itself and therefore has no true reality. If those opponents however should object: "but in your thinking itself there does exist succession, therefore neither could your thinking be real and consequently could not prove anything," then Parmenides perhaps like Kant in a similar case of an equal objection would have answered: "I can, it is true, say my conceptions follow upon one another, but that means only that we are not conscious of them unless within a chronological order, *i.e.*, according to the form of the inner sense. For that reason time is not a something in itself nor any order or quality objectively adherent to things." We should therefore have to distinguish between the Pure Thinking, that would be timeless like the one Parmenidean "Being," and the consciousness of this thinking, and the latter would already translate the thinking into the form of appearance, *i.e.,* of succession, plurality and motion. It is probable that Parmenides would have availed himself of this loophole; however, the same objection would then have to be raised against him which is raised against Kant by A. Spir ("Thinking And Reality," 2nd ed., vol i., pp. 209, &c.). "Now, in the first place however it is clear, that I cannot know anything of a succession as such, unless I have the successive members of the same simultaneously in my consciousness. Thus the conception of a succession itself is not at all successive, hence also quite different from the succession of our conceptions. Secondly Kant's assumption implies such obvious absurdities that one is surprised that he could leave them unnoticed. Caesar and Socrates

according to this assumption are not really dead, they still live exactly as they did two thousand years ago and only seem to be dead, as a consequence of an organisation of my inner sense." Future men already live and if they do not now step forward as living that organisation of the "inner sense" is likewise the cause of it. Here above all other things the question is to be put: How can the beginning and the end of conscious life itself, together with all its internal and external senses, exist merely in the conception of the inner sense? *The* fact is indeed this, that one certainly cannot deny the reality of Change. If it is thrown out through the window it slips in again through the keyhole. If one says: "It merely seems to me, that conditions and conceptions change," — then this very semblance and appearance itself is something objectively existing and within it without doubt the succession has objective reality, some things in it really do succeed one another. — Besides one must observe that indeed the whole critique of reason only has cause and right of existence under the assumption that to us our *conceptions* themselves appear exactly as they are. For if the conceptions also appeared to us otherwise than they really are, then one would not be able to advance any solid proposition about them, and therefore would not be able to accomplish any gnosiology or any "transcendental" investigation of objective validity. Now it remains however beyond all doubt that our conceptions themselves appear to us as successive."

The contemplation of this undoubted succession and agitation has now urged Anaxagoras to a memorable hypothesis. Obviously the conceptions themselves moved themselves, were not pushed and had no cause of motion outside themselves. Therefore he said to himself, there exists a something which bears in itself the origin and the commencement of motion; secondly, however, he notices that this conception was moving not only itself but also something quite different, the body. He discovers therefore, in the most immediate experience an effect of conceptions upon expansive matter, which makes itself known as motion in the latter. That was to him a fact; and only incidentally it stimulated him to explain this fact. Let it suffice that he had a regulative schema for the motion in the world, — this motion he now understood either as a motion of the true isolated essences through the Conceptual Principle, the Nous, or as a motion through a something already moved. That with his fundamental assumption the latter kind, the mechanical transmission of motions and impacts likewise contained in itself a problem, probably escaped him; the commonness and everyday occurrence of the effect through impact most probably dulled his eye to the mysteriousness of impact. On the other hand he certainly felt the problematic, even contradictory nature of an effect of conceptions upon substances existing in themselves and he also tried therefore to trace this effect back to a mechanical push and impact

which were considered by him as quite comprehensible. For the Nous too was without doubt such a substance existing in itself and was characterised by him as a very delicate and subtle matter, with the specific quality of thinking. With a character assumed in this way, the effect of this matter upon other matter had of course to be of exactly the same kind as that which another substance exercises upon a third, *i.e.,* a mechanical effect, moving by pressure and impact. Still the philosopher had now a substance which moves itself and other things, a substance of which the motion did not come from outside and depended on no one else: whereas it seemed almost a matter of indifference how this automobilism was to be conceived of, perhaps similar to that pushing themselves hither and thither of very fragile and small globules of quicksilver. Among all questions which concern motion there is none more troublesome than the question as to the beginning of motion. For if one may be allowed to conceive of all remaining motions as effect and consequences, then nevertheless the first primal motion is still to be explained; for the mechanical motions, the first link of the chain certainly cannot lie in a mechanical motion, since that would be as good as recurring to the nonsensical idea of the *causa sui.* But likewise it is not feasible to attribute to the eternal, unconditional things a motion of their own, as it were from the beginning, as dowry of their existence. For motion cannot be conceived without a direction whither and whereupon, therefore only as relation and condition; but a thing is no longer "entitative-in-itself" and "unconditional," if according to its nature it refers necessarily to something existing outside of it. In this embarrassment Anaxagoras thought he had found an extraordinary help and salvation in that Nous, automobile and otherwise independent*;* the nature of that Nous being just obscure and veiled enough to produce the deception about it, that its assumption also involves that forbidden *causa sui.* To empiric observation it is even an established fact that Conception is not a *causa sui* but the effect of the brain, yea, it must appear to that observation as an odd eccentricity to separate the "mind," the product of the brain, from its *causa* and still to deem it existing after this severing. This Anaxagoras did; he forgot the brain, its marvellous design, the delicacy and intricacy of its convolutions and passages and he decreed the "Mind-In-Itself." This "Mind-In-Itself" alone among all substances had Free-will, — a grand discernment! This Mind was able at any odd time to begin with the motion of the things outside it; on the other hand for ages and ages it could occupy itself with itself — in short Anaxagoras was allowed to assume a *first* moment of motion in some primeval age, as the *Chalaza* of all so-called Becoming; *i.e.,* of all Change, namely of all shifting and rearranging of the eternal substances and their particles. Although the Mind itself is eternal, it is in no way compelled to torment itself for eternities with the shifting about of grains of matter; and

certainly there was a time and a state of those matters — it is quite indifferent whether that time was of long or short duration — during which the Nous had not acted upon them, during which they were still unmoved. That is the period of the Anaxagorean chaos.

16

The Anaxagorean chaos is not an immediately evident conception; in order to grasp it one must have understood the conception which our philosopher had with respect to the so-called "Becoming." For in itself the state of all heterogeneous "Elementary-existences" before all motion would by no means necessarily result in an absolute mixture of all "seeds of things," as the expression of Anaxagoras runs, an intermixture, which he imagined as a complete pell-mell, disordered in its smallest parts, after all these "Elementary-existences" had been, as in a mortar, pounded and resolved into atoms of dust, so that now in that chaos, as in an amphora, they could be whirled into a medley. One might say that this conception of the chaos did not contain anything inevitable, that one merely needed rather to assume any chance position of all those "existences," but not an infinite decomposition of them; an irregular side-by-side arrangement was already sufficient; there was no need of a pell-mell, let alone such a total pell-mell. What therefore put into Anaxagoras' head that difficult and complex conception? As already said: his conception of the empirically given Becoming. From his experience he drew first a most extraordinary proposition on the Becoming, and this proposition necessarily resulted in that doctrine of the chaos, as its consequence.

The observation of the processes of evolution in nature, not a consideration of an earlier philosophical system, suggested to Anaxagoras the doctrine, that *All originated from All;* this was the conviction of the natural philosopher based upon a manifold, and at the bottom, of course, excessively inadequate induction. He proved it thus: if even the contrary could originate out of the contrary, *e g.,* the Black out of the White, everything is possible; that however did happen with the dissolution of white snow into black water. The nourishment of the body he explained to himself in this way: that in the articles of food there must be invisibly small constituents of flesh or blood or bone which during alimentation became disengaged and united with the homogeneous in the body. But if All can become out of All, the Firm out of the Liquid, the Hard out of the Soft, the Black out of the White, the Fleshy out of Bread, then also All must be contained in All. The names of things in that case express only the preponderance of the one substance over the other substances to be met with in smaller, often imperceptible

quantities. In gold, that is to say, in that which one designates *a potiore* by the name "gold," there must be also contained silver, snow, bread, and flesh, but in very small quantities; the whole is called after the preponderating item, the gold-substance.

But how is it possible, that one substance preponderates and fills a thing in greater mass than the others present? Experience shows, that this preponderance is gradually produced only through Motion, that the preponderance is the result of a process, which we commonly call Becoming. On the other hand, that "All is in All" is not the result of a process, but, on the contrary, the preliminary condition of all Becoming and all Motion, and is consequently previous to all Becoming. In other words: experience teaches, that continually the like is added to the like, through nourishment, therefore originally those homogeneous substances were not together and agglomerated, but they were separate. Rather, in all empiric processes coming before our eyes, the homogeneous is always segregated from the heterogeneous and transmitted (*e g.*, during nourishment, the particles of flesh out of the bread, &c.), consequently the pell-mell of the different substances is the older form of the constitution of things and in point of time previous to all Becoming and Moving. If all so-called Becoming is a segregating and presupposes a mixture, the question arises, what degree of intermixture this pell-mell must have had originally. Although the process of a moving on the part of the homogeneous to the homogeneous — *i.e.,* Becoming — has already lasted an immense time, one recognises in spite of that, that even yet in all things remainders and seed-grains of all other things are enclosed, waiting for their segregation, and one recognises further that only here and there a preponderance has been brought about; the primal mixture must have been a complete one, *i.e.,* going down to the infinitely small, since the separation and unmixing takes up an infinite length of time. Thereby strict adherence is paid to the thought: that everything which possesses an essential "Being" is infinitely divisible, without forfeiting its specificum.

According to these hypotheses Anaxagoras conceives of the world's primal existence: perhaps as similar to a dust-like mass of infinitely small, concrete particles of which every one is specifically simple and possesses one quality only, yet so arranged that every specific quality is represented in an infinite number of individual particles. Such particles Aristotle has called *Homoiomere* in consideration of the fact that they are the Parts, all equal one to another, of a Whole which is homogeneous with its Parts. One would however commit a serious mistake to equate this primal pell-mell of all such particles, such "seed-grains of things" to the one primal matter of Anaximander; for the latter's primal matter called the "Indefinite" is a thoroughly coherent and peculiar mass, the

former's primal pell-mell is an aggregate of substances. It is true one can assert about this Aggregate of Substances exactly the same as about the Indefinite of Anaximander, as Aristotle does: it could be neither white nor grey, nor black, nor of any other colour; it was tasteless, scentless, and altogether as a Whole defined neither quantitatively nor qualitatively: so far goes the similarity of the Anaximandrian Indefinite and the Anaxagorean Primal Mixture. But disregarding this negative equality they distinguish themselves one from another positively by the latter being a compound, the former a unity. Anaxagoras had by the assumption of his Chaos at least so much to his advantage, that he was not compelled to deduce the Many from the One, the Becoming out of the "Existent."

Of course with his complete intermixture of the "seeds" he had to admit one exception: the Nous was not then, nor is It now admixed with any thing. For if It were admixed with only one "Existent," It would have, in infinite divisions, to dwell in all things. This exception is logically very dubious, especially considering the previously described material nature of the Nous, it has something mythological in itself and seems arbitrary, but was however, according to Anaxagorean *proemissa,* a strict necessity. The Mind, which is moreover infinitely divisible like any other matter, only not through other matters but through Itself, has, if It divides Itself, in dividing and conglobating sometimes in large, sometimes in small masses, Its equal mass and quality from all eternity; and that which at this minute exists as Mind in animals, plants, men, was also Mind without a more or less, although distributed in another way a thousand years ago. But wherever It had a relation to another substance, there It never was admixed with it, but voluntarily seized it, moved and pushed it arbitrarily — in short, ruled it. Mind, which alone has motion in Itself, alone possesses ruling power in this world and shows it through moving the grains of matter. But whither does It move them? Or is a motion conceivable, without direction, without path? Is Mind in Its impacts just as arbitrary as it is, with regard to the time when It pushes, and when It does not push? In short, does Chance, *i.e.,* the blindest option, rule within Motion? At this boundary we step into the Most Holy within the conceptual realm of Anaxagoras.

17

What had to be done with that chaotic pell-mell of the primal state previous to all motion, so that out of it, without any increase of new substances and forces, the existing world might originate, with its regular stellar orbits, with its regulated forms of seasons and days, with its manifold beauty and order, — in short, so that out of the Chaos might come a Cosmos? This can be only the effect of Motion,

and of a definite and well-organised motion. This Motion itself is the means of the Nous, Its goal would be the perfect segregation of the homogeneous, a goal up to the present not yet attained, because the disorder and the mixture in the beginning was infinite. This goal is to be striven after only by an enormous process, not to be realized suddenly by a mythological stroke of the wand. If ever, at an infinitely distant point of time, it is achieved that everything homogeneous is brought together and the "primal-existences" undivided are encamped side by side in beautiful order, and every particle has found its comrades and its home, and the great peace comes about after the great division and splitting up of the substances, and there will be no longer anything that is divided and split up, then the Nous will again return into Its automobilism and, no longer Itself divided, roam through the world, sometimes in larger, sometimes in smaller masses, as plant-mind or animal-mind, and no longer will It take up Its new dwelling-place in other matter. Meanwhile the task has not been completed; but the kind of motion which the Nous has thought out, in order to solve the task, shows a marvellous suitableness, for by this motion the task is further solved in each new moment. For this motion has the character of concentrically progressive circular motion; it began at some one point of the chaotic mixture, in the form of a little gyration, and in ever larger paths this circular movement traverses all existing "Being," jerking forth everywhere the homogeneous to the homogeneous. At first this revolution brings everything Dense to the Dense, everything Rare to the Rare, and likewise all that is Dark, Bright, Moist, Dry to their kind; above these general groups or classifications there are again two still more comprehensive, namely *Ether,* that is to say everything that is Warm, Bright, Rare, and *Aer,* that is to say everything that is Dark, Cold, Heavy, Firm. Through the segregation of the ethereal masses from the aerial, there is formed, as the most immediate effect of that epicycle whose centre moves along in the circumference of ever greater circles, a something as in an eddy made in standing water; heavy compounds are led towards the middle and compressed. Just in the same way that travelling waterspout in chaos forms itself on the outer side out of the Ethereal, Rare, Bright Constituents, on the inner side out of the Cloudy, Heavy, Moist Constituents. Then in the course of this process out of that Aerial mass, conglomerating in its interior, water is separated, and again out of the water the earthy element, and then out of the earthy element, under the effect of the awful cold are separated the stones. Again at some juncture masses of stone, through the momentum of the rotation, are torn away sideways from the earth and thrown into the realm of the hot light Ether; there in the latter's fiery element they are made to glow and, carried along in the ethereal rotation, they irradiate light, and as sun and stars illuminate and warm the earth, in herself dark and cold. The whole conception is

of a wonderful daring and simplicity and has nothing of that clumsy and anthropomorphical teleology, which has been frequently connected with the name of Anaxagoras. That conception has its greatness just in this, that it derives the whole Cosmos of Becoming out of the moved circle, whereas Parmenides contemplated the true "Existent" as a resting, dead ball. Once that circle is put into motion and caused to roll by the Nous, then all the order, law and beauty of the world is the natural consequence of that first impetus. How very much one wrongs Anaxagoras if one reproaches him for the wise abstention from teleology which shows itself in this conception and talks scornfully of his Nous as of a *deus ex machina.* Rather, on account of the elimination of mythological and theistic miracleworking and anthropomorphic ends and utilities, Anaxagoras might have made use of proud words similar to those which Kant used in his Natural History of the Heavens. For it is indeed a sublime thought, to retrace that grandeur of the cosmos and the marvellous arrangement of the orbits of the stars, to retrace all that, in all forms to a simple, purely mechanical motion and, as it were, to a moved mathematical figure, and therefore not to reduce all that to purposes and intervening hands of a machine-god, but only to a kind of oscillation, which, having once begun, is in its progress necessary and definite, and effects result which resemble the wisest computation of sagacity and extremely well thought-out fitness without being anything of the sort. "I enjoy the pleasure," says Kant, "of seeing how a well-ordered whole produces itself without the assistance of arbitrary fabrications, under the impulse of fixed laws of motion — a well-ordered whole which looks so similar to that world-system which is ours, that I cannot abstain from considering it to be the same. It seems to me that one might say here, in a certain sense without presumption: 'Give me matter and I will build a world out of it.'"

18

Suppose now, that for once we allow that primal mixture as rightly concluded, some considerations especially from Mechanics seem to oppose the grand plan of the world edifice. For even though the Mind at a point causes a circular movement its continuation is only conceivable with great difficulty, especially since it is to be infinite and gradually to make all existing masses rotate. As a matter of course one would assume that the pressure of all the remaining matter would have crushed out this small circular movement when it had scarcely begun; that this does not happen presupposes on the part of the stimulating Nous, that the latter began to work suddenly with awful force, or at any rate so quickly, that we must call the motion a whirl: such a whirl as Democritus himself imagined. And

since this whirl must be infinitely strong in order not to be checked through the whole world of the Infinite weighing heavily upon it, it will be infinitely quick, for strength can manifest itself originally only in speed. On the contrary the broader the concentric rings are, the slower will be this motion; if once the motion could reach the end of the infinitely extended world, then this motion would have already infinitely little speed of rotation. *Vice versá,* if we conceive of the motion as infinitely great, *i.e.,* infinitely quick, at the moment of the very first beginning of motion, then the original circle must have been infinitely small; we get therefore as the beginning a particle rotated round itself, a particle with an infinitely small material content. This however would not at all explain the further motion; one might imagine even all particles of the primal mass to rotate round themselves and yet the whole mass would remain unmoved and unseparated. If, however, that material particle of infinite smallness, caught and swung by the Nous, was not turned round itself but described a circle somewhat larger than a point, this would cause it to knock against other material particles, to move them on, to hurl them, to make them rebound and thus gradually to stir up a great and spreading tumult within which, as the next result, that separation of the aerial masses from the ethereal had to take place. Just as the commencement of the motion itself is an arbitrary act of the Nous, arbitrary also is the manner of this commencement in so far as the first motion circumscribes a circle of which the radius is chosen somewhat larger than a point.

19

Here of course one might ask, what fancy had at that time so suddenly occurred to the Nous, to knock against some chance material particle out of that number of particles and to turn it around in whirling dance and why that did not occur to It earlier. Whereupon Anaxagoras would answer: "The Nous has the privilege of arbitrary action; It may begin at any chance time, It depends on Itself, whereas everything else is determined from outside. It has no duty, and no end which It might be compelled to pursue; if It did once begin with that motion and set Itself an end, this after all was only — the answer is difficult, Heraclitus would say — *play!*"

That seems always to have been the last solution or answer hovering on the lips of the Greek. The Anaxagorean Mind is an artist and in truth the most powerful genius of mechanics and architecture, creating with the simplest means the most magnificent forms and tracks and as it were a mobile architecture, but always out of that irrational arbitrariness which lies in the soul of the artist. It is as though Anaxagoras was pointing at Phidias and in face of the immense work of art, the

Cosmos, was calling out to us as he would do in front of the Parthenon: “The Becoming is no moral, but only an artistic phenomenon.” Aristotle relates that, to the question what made life worth living, Anaxagoras had answered: “Contemplating the heavens and the total order of the Cosmos.” He treated physical things so devotionally, and with that same mysterious awe, which we feel when standing in front of an antique temple; his doctrine became a species of free-thinking religious exercise, protecting itself through the *odi profanum vulgus et arceo* and choosing its adherents with precaution out of the highest and noblest society of Athens. In the exclusive community of the Athenian Anaxagoreans the mythology of the people was allowed only as a symbolic language; all myths, all gods, all heroes were considered here only as hieroglyphics of the interpretation of nature, and even the Homeric epic was said to be the canonic song of the sway of the Nous and the struggles and laws of Nature. Here and there a note from this society of sublime free-thinkers penetrated to the people; and especially Euripides, the great and at all times daring Euripides, ever thinking of something new, dared to let many things become known by means of the tragic mask, many things which pierced like an arrow through the senses of the masses and from which the latter freed themselves only by means of ludicrous caricatures and ridiculous re-interpretations.

The greatest of all Anaxagoreans however is Pericles, the mightiest and worthiest man of the world; and Plato bears witness that the philosophy of Anaxagoras alone had given that sublime flight to the genius of Pericles. When as a public orator he stood before his people, in the beautiful rigidity and immobility of a marble Olympian and now, calm, wrapped in his mantle, with unruffled drapery, without any change of facial expression, without smile, with a voice the strong tone of which remained ever the same, and when he now spoke in an absolutely un Demosthenic but merely Periclean fashion, when he thundered, struck with lightnings, annihilated and redeemed — then he was the epitome of the Anaxagorean Cosmos, the image of the Nous, who has built for Itself the most beautiful and dignified receptacle, then Pericles was as it were the visible human incarnation of the building, moving, eliminating, ordering, reviewing, artistically-undetermined force of the Mind. Anaxagoras himself said man was the most rational being or he must necessarily shelter the Nous within himself in greater fulness than all other beings, because he had such admirable organs as his hands; Anaxagoras concluded therefore, that that Nous, according to the extent to which It made Itself master of a material body, was always forming for Itself out of this material the tools corresponding to Its degree of power, consequently the Nous made the most beautiful and appropriate tools, when It was appearing in his greatest fulness. And as the most wondrous and appropriate action of the Nous

was that circular primal-motion, since at that time the Mind was still together, undivided, in Itself, thus to the listening Anaxagoras the effect of the Periclean speech often appeared perhaps as a simile of that circular primal-motion; for here too he perceived a whirl of thoughts moving itself at first with awful force but in an orderly manner, which in concentric circles gradually caught and carried away the nearest and farthest and which, when it reached its end, had reshaped — organising and segregating — the whole nation.

To the later philosophers of antiquity the way in which Anaxagoras made use of his Nous for the interpretation of the world was strange, indeed scarcely pardonable; to them it seemed as though he had found a grand tool but had not well understood it and they tried to retrieve what the finder had neglected. They therefore did not recognise what meaning the abstention of Anaxagoras, inspired by the purest spirit of the method of natural science, had, and that this abstention first of all in every case puts to itself the question: "What is the cause of Something"? *(causa efficiens*) — and not "What is the purpose of Something"? *(causa finalis)*. The Nous has not been dragged in by Anaxagoras for the purpose of answering the special question: "What is the cause of motion and what causes regular motions?"; Plato however reproaches him, that he ought to have, but had not shown that everything was in its own fashion and its own place the most beautiful, the best and the most appropriate. But this Anaxagoras would not have dared to assert in any individual case, to him the existing world was not even the most conceivably perfect world, for he saw everything originate out of everything, and he found the segregation of the substances through the Nous complete and done with, neither at the end of the filled space of the world nor in the individual beings. For his understanding it was sufficient that he had found a motion, which, by simple continued action could create the visible order out of a chaos mixed through and through; and he took good care not to put the question as to the Why? of the motion, as to the rational purpose of motion. For if the Nous had to fulfil by means of motion a purpose innate in the noumenal essence, then it was no longer in Its free will to commence the motion at any chance time; in so far as the Nous is eternal, It had also to be determined eternally by this purpose, and then no point of time could have been allowed to exist in which motion was still lacking, indeed it would have been logically forbidden to assume a starting point for motion: whereby again the conception of original chaos, the basis of the whole Anaxagorean interpretation of the world would likewise have become logically impossible. In order to escape such difficulties, which teleology creates, Anaxagoras had always to emphasise and asseverate that the Mind has free will; all Its actions, including that of the primal motion, were actions of the "free will," whereas on the contrary after that primeval moment the whole remaining world

was shaping itself in a strictly determined, and more precisely, mechanically determined form. That absolutely free will however can be conceived only as purposeless, somewhat after the fashion of children's play or the artist's bent for play. It is an error to ascribe to Anaxagoras the common confusion of the teleologist, who, marvelling at the extraordinary appropriateness, at the agreement of the parts with the whole, especially in the realm of the organic, assumes that that which exists for the intellect had also come into existence through intellect, and that that which man brings about only under the guidance of the idea of purpose, must have been brought about by Nature through reflection and ideas of purpose. (Schopenhauer, "The World As Will And Idea," vol ii., Second Book, chap. 26: On Teleology). Conceived in the manner of Anaxagoras, however, the order and appropriateness of things on the contrary is nothing but the immediate result of a blind mechanical motion; and only in order to cause this motion, in order to get for once out of the dead-rest of the Chaos, Anaxagoras assumed the free-willed Nous who depends only on Itself. He appreciated in the Nous just the very quality of being a thing of chance, a chance agent, therefore of being able to act unconditioned, undetermined, guided neither by causes nor by purposes.

NOTES FOR A CONTINUATION (EARLY PART OF 1873)

THAT this total conception of the Anaxagorean doctrine must be right, is proved most clearly by the way in which the successors of Anaxagoras, the Agrigentine Empedocles and the atomic teacher Democritus in their counter-systems actually criticised and improved that doctrine. The method of this critique is more than anything a continued renunciation in that spirit of natural science mentioned above, the law of economy applied to the interpretation of nature. That hypothesis, which explains the existing world with the smallest expenditure of assumptions and means is to have preference: for in such a hypothesis is to be found the least amount of arbitrariness, and in it free play with possibilities is prohibited. Should there be two hypotheses which both explain the world, then a strict test must be applied as to which of the two better satisfies that demand of economy. He who can manage this explanation with the simpler and more known forces, especially the mechanical ones, he who deduces the existing edifice of the world out of the smallest possible number of forces, will always be preferred to him who allows the more complicated and less-known forces, and these moreover in greater number, to carry on a world-creating play. So then we see Empedocles endeavouring to remove the *superfluity* of hypotheses from the doctrine of Anaxagoras.

The first hypothesis which falls as unnecessary is that of the Anaxagorean Nous, for its assumption is much too complex to explain anything so simple as motion. After all it is only necessary to explain the two kinds of motion: the motion of a body towards another, and the motion away from another.

2

If our present Becoming is a segregating, although not a complete one, then Empedocles asks: what prevents complete segregation? Evidently a force works against it, *i.e.,* a latent motion of attraction.

Further: in order to explain that Chaos, a force must already have been at work; a movement is necessary to bring about this complicated entanglement.

Therefore periodical preponderance of the one and the other force is certain. They are opposites.

The force of attraction is still at work; for otherwise there would be no Things at all, everything would be segregated.

This is the actual fact: two kinds of motion. The Nous does not explain them. On the contrary, Love and Hatred; indeed we certainly see that these move as well as that the Nous moves.

Now the conception of the primal state undergoes a change: it is the most *blessed.* With Anaxagoras it was the chaos before the architectural work, the heap of stones as it were upon the building site.

3

Empedocles had conceived the thought of a tangential force originated by revolution and working against gravity ("de coelo," i., p. 284), Schopenhauer, "W. A. W.," ii. 390.

He considered the continuation of the circular movement according to Anaxagoras *impossible.* It would result in a *whirl*, *i.e.,* the contrary of ordered motion.

If the particles were infinitely mixed, pell-mell, then one would be able to break asunder the bodies without any exertion of power, they would not cohere or hold together, they would be as dust.

The forces, which press the atoms against one another, and which give stability to the mass, Empedocles calls "Love." It is a molecular force, a constitutive force of the bodies.

4

Against Anaxagoras.

1. The Chaos already presupposes motion.

2. Nothing prevented the complete segregation.

3. Our bodies would be dust-forms. How can motion exist, if there are not counter-motions in all bodies?

4. An ordered permanent circular motion impossible; only a whirl. He assumes the whirl itself to be an effect of the 'nikos'— '*aporroiai.'*. How do distant things operate on one another, sun upon earth? If everything were still in a whirl, that would be impossible. Therefore at least two moving powers: which must be inherent in Things.

5. Why infinite όντα? Transgression of experience. Anaxagoras meant the chemical atoms. Empedocles tried the assumption of four kinds of chemical atoms. He took the aggregate states to be essential, and heat to be co-ordinated.

Therefore the aggregate states through repulsion and attraction; matter in four forms.

1. The periodical principle is necessary.

2. With the living beings Empedocles will also deal still on the same principle. Here also he denies purposiveness. His greatest deed. With Anaxagoras a dualism.

5

The symbolism of *sexual love.* Here as in the Platonic fable the longing after Oneness shows itself, and here, likewise, is shown that once a greater unity already existed; were this greater unity established, then this would again strive after a still greater one. The conviction of the unity of everything living guarantees that once there was an *immense Living Something,* of which we are pieces; that is probably the Sphairos itself. He is the most blessed deity. Everything was connected only through love, therefore in the highest degree appropriate. Love has been torn to pieces and splintered by hatred, love has been divided into her elements and killed — bereft of life. In the whirl no living individuals originate. Eventually everything is segregated and now our period begins. (He opposes the Anaxagorean Primal Mixture by a Primal Discord.) Love, blind as she is, with furious haste again throws the elements one against another endeavouring to see whether she can bring them back to life again or not. Here and there she is successful. It continues. A presentiment originates in the living beings, that they are to strive after still higher unions than home and the primal state. Eros. It is a terrible crime to kill life, for thereby one works back to the Primal Discord. Some day everything will be again one *single life*, the most blissful state.

The Pythagorean-orphean doctrine re-interpreted in the manner of natural science. Empedocles consciously masters both means of expression, therefore he is the first rhetor. Political aims.

The double-nature — the agonal and the loving, the compassionate.

Attempt of the *Hellenic total reform.*

All inorganic matter has originated out of organic, it is dead organic matter. Corpse and man.

6

DEMOCRITUS

The greatest possible simplification of the hypotheses.

1. There is motion, therefore vacuum, therefore a "Non-Existent." Thinking is motion.

2. If there is a "Non-Existent" it must be indivisible, *i.e.,* absolutely filled. Division is only explicable in case of empty spaces and pores. The "Non-Existent" alone is an absolutely porous thing.

3. The secondary qualities of matter, *νόμφ,* not of Matter-In-Itself.

4. Establishment of the primary qualities of the *άτομα.* Wherein homogeneous, wherein heterogeneous?

5. The aggregate-states of Empedocles (four elements) presuppose only the homogeneous atoms, they themselves cannot therefore be όντα.

6. Motion is connected indissolubly with theatoms, effect of gravity. Epicur. Critique: what does gravity signify in an infinite vacuum?

7. Thinking is the motion of the fire-atoms. Soul, life, perceptions of the senses.

Value of materialism and its embarrassment.

Plato and Democritus.

The hermit-like homeless noble searcher for truth.

Democritus and the Pythagoreans together find the basis of natural sciences.

What are the causes which have interrupted a flourishing science of experimental physics in antiquity after Democritus?

7

Anaxagoras has taken from Heraclitus the idea that in every Becoming and in every Being the opposites are together.

He felt strongly the contradiction that a body has many qualities and he *pulverised* it in the belief that he had now dissolved it into its true qualities.

Plato: first Heraclitean, later Sceptic: Everything, even Thinking, is in a state of flux.

Brought through Socrates to the permanence of the good, the beautiful.

These assumed as entitative.

All generic ideals partake of the idea of the good, the beautiful, and they too are therefore *entitative, being* (as the soul partakes of the idea of Life). The idea is *formless.*

Through Pythagoras' metempsychosis has been answered the question: how we can know anything about the ideas.

Plato's end: scepticism in Parmenides. Refutation of ideology.

8

CONCLUSION

Greek thought during the *tragic age is pessimistic* or *artistically optimistic.*

Their judgment about *life* implies more.

The One, flight from the Becoming. *Aut* unity, *aut* artistic play.

Deep distrust of reality: nobody assumes a good god, who has made everything *optime.*

(Pythagoreans, religious sect. Anaximander.

Empedocles.

Eleates.

Anaxagoras.

Heraclitus.

Democritus: the world without moral and aesthetic meaning, pessimism of chance.

If one placed a tragedy before all these, the three former would see in it the mirror of the fatality of existence, Parmenides a transitory appearance, Heraclitus and Anaxagoras an artistic edifice and image of the world-laws, Democritus the result of machines.

With Socrates *Optimism* begins, an optimism no longer artistic, with teleology and faith in the good god; faith in the enlightened good man. Dissolution of the instincts.

Socrates breaks with the hitherto prevailing *knowledge* and *culture;* he intends returning to the old citizen-virtue and to the State.

Plato dissociates himself from the State, when he observes that the State has become identical with the new Culture.

The Socratic scepticism is a weapon against the hitherto prevailing culture and knowledge.